

Extended Family\*\*\*Chapters 1-18

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Summary: This is the sequel to "And So It Goes" & "Red Red Rose", focuses on Carly Benson's life and family

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\*\*\*Extended Family\*\* \*

Hello everyone! This is just a sample of my story, which is no up to 110 chapters. It takes the back history I've made with "And So it Goes", "Red Red Rose" and "Surviving Without You" and weaves it into GH history, starting in November of 1998. The first few chapters are bad if I say so myself, but they DO get better as you go along! I promise!

Thanks,

KimLee

Extended Family in its entirety can be found at

<http://www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/Lot/5704>

\*\*\*Ferncliff, November 1998\*\*\*

Caroline Bensen was as usual laying on her bed in Ferncliff, hands folded behind her head, wishing for something to happen. Jason had just visited her a few days ago and he had promised to visit again on Friday, but Friday is such a long time away.

'Who am I kidding?' Caroline rolled her eyes. 'I've been in here for how many months and I can't wait a few more days'

Thoughts of her son flashed through her head as they so often did these past months. She took out the picture that was already worn and

wrinkled from her caresses and clutches to the heart. She wondered how red his hair had gotten since the picture had been taken.

Carly sighed. There were so many questions that she couldn't wait to ask Jason on Friday. What Michael's favorite toy was, what he liked to eat, what his face looked like when he slept. Then her mind drifted to whether he calls Robin Mama yet.

'Dammit!'' Carly yelled, pounding her fists into the rigid cot beneath her. No matter how peaceful her thoughts were a moment before, a thought of the virgin queen drowned out those moments with pools of red.

'Come on Caroline, just because you're in a nut house doesn't mean you have to start talking to yourself,' a pleasant voice interrupted Carly's outburst.

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Lucky was staring at the computer screen. He had been staring at it for quite some time. Nikolas looked over Lucky's shoulder again. The long lists of http's and dotcoms made little to no sense to him and he didn't understand how Lucky could be making any progress.

'Do you mind?!' Lucky raised his voice looking at the 'cassidine spawn'. He couldn't remember why he had agreed to work with Prince Nikky.

'What?! I was just trying to see what you've been transfixed with for the past ten minutes,' Nikolas said, clearly agitated. He didn't know how long he could take the Prince of all teen angst.

'It's nothing, I can't find anything.' Lucky said in a much calmer voice.

Nikolas sighed. His half-brothers emotional outbursts were annoying, but they had become less so in the past few days. He would never admit this to anyone, but working with Lucky was becoming easier. He found Lucky extremely intelligent and for lack of a better word, likeable.

'Well, what about your earlier idea, going back and searching for other models represented by Emily's agent?' Nikolas offered.

Lucky bit his lip and nodded his head. He hated to admit it, but Nikolas was proving himself to be helpful. In the past few days he had started to see things in Nikolas that he hadn't really seen before, like passion and a sense of what was right.

'I guess you're right man,' Lucky paused, thinking out his next words carefully. 'I can't wait until we catch this guy.'

Nikolas smiled, it was the first time Lucky said 'we'.

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Carly looked up at this unexpected visitor and her jaw dropped and a look of sheer happiness exploded on her face.

'Katie?, oh my god, you finally came, I can't...' Carly babbled, the always ready tears brimmed in her eyes. Unlike all the other tears of the past few months, these were tears of pure joy.

The tall raven haired girl rushed over to the cot and hugged Carly fiercely. She looked at the tear freely falling down Carly's face.

'Don't cry Caroline, I'm sorry I surprised you,' Katie said with childlike innocence, tears coming to her own eyes.

'Are you kidding this is the best surprise ever, how did you get in here?'

Katie gave Carly a sly smirk. 'Come on, maximum security nuthouse, piece of cake. I had to come and see you and give you the greatest news.'

'spit it out'

'I'm getting you out of here.'

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## Chapter Two

\*\*\*\*Ferncliff\*\*\*\*

'You're what?' Carly said breathlessly.

'I'm getting you out of here'

'Katieâ€¦I don't understand. How?' Carly said with a monotone voice. Not the pomp and circumstance she gave Jason, but a calm, clear monotone voice.

'Does it really matter Caroline? You need my help, that Morgan guy isn't going to get you out of here. He can't. The only thing that matters is you'll be holding your son before the night is through.'

The waves of emotion running through Carly's body had finally broken and the widest grin broke out and lit up her entire face. Again the easy tears of happiness shined in her eyes. 'Yea, take me home to see my baby boy.'

Katie's face lit up, almost equaling the joy in Carly's face, 'Good, I'm glad. Come on, I have to tell you my plan'

\*\*\*\*\*Florida, Thirteen years ago, Caroline's Elementary school\*\*\*\*\*

A ten year old Caroline walked defiantly through the halls. She was being sent to the principal's office again. She didn't care though, she tossed her strawberry blond hair and put on a smirk that could only mean she was up to pure evil. She walked past the principal's office and was heading to the front door when she heard the tiniest sob coming from a corner of the hallway.

Caroline stopped cold in her tracks. How many times had she heard

that whimpering coming from herself? The defiant expression melted from her face and she turned around to see a girl a little younger than herself, with her head in her hands. The little girl's black hair was in total disarray and her knee was skinned.

'Hey, hey kid, it's ok you know,' Caroline said as she sat next to the weeping girl. 'You know that'll heal. It hurts at first when they put the disinfectant on, but this is a cool trick to do. When the nurse is putting it on, just yell really loud and kick her.'

'NO! It's not my knee!' the little girl exclaimed, looking up for the first time. Her brown eyes red from crying. She looked down again and muttered, 'It's something else'

'Yea, well believe me, I've heard a lot of things to make people cry, try me'

'I got into a fight, with some of the kids I live with now'

'Don't worry they only suspend you for a few days because of fighting, and you're mom won't be mad when she sees that you're hurt. Just keep saying your leg hurts andâ€|'

'NO! My mommy is dead! The kids don't like me cause their mommy took me in, they say I'm an orphan and they don't want me in their house any more,' yet another emotional outburst seemed to calm the little girl and she looked at Caroline with solemn eyes, 'They said my mommy deserved to die.'

Caroline's heart broke in two for this girl. This girl who was so similar to herself.

'What's your name?' Caroline said in a voice she didn't even recognize as her own, it was so soft and gentle.

'It's Katie, my mommy, she used to call me Katya'

'Mine's Caroline. Want to know a secret?' the little girl looked up with hopeful eyes. 'I don't live with my real Mommy either'

'Did your real Mommy die too?'

Caroline looked down at her hands, they were obviously a child's hands, small and chubby, but she didn't feel she was a child. She looked up and said quietly with tears in her eyes. 'I don't know, I think she didn't want me' Tears began to fall down her cheeks.

Katie looked at this girl, this older girl who seemed to be so wise and strong, and she was crying. 'Please don't cry Caroline, I'm sorry I told you sad things. Will you be my friend?'

Caroline smiled shyly through the tears, 'yea, I'll be your friend'

\*\*\*\*Ferncliff\*\*\*\*

Caroline was being led out of Ferncliff in handcuffs. Katie was

behind her still arguing with Dr. Evans. Eventually Katie's temper exploded and she told Evans a few things about his profession and how he had not lived up to the Hippocratic oath. She also added a few words that made Carly smile. Carly had taught her those words. As Carly was placed in the Jeep that Katie had brought. Katie demanded that the handcuffs be taken off.

'But Dr. Thomas, this woman is dangerous to societyâ€|you can not be seriousâ€|''Dr. Evans sputtered, trying to be authoritative in the last few moments.

'DR. EVANS, the only reason this woman is dangerous to society is because of the archaic treatment you have been given her. No remove the handcuffs or you will be hearing from my superiors.'

The handcuffs were removed and Katie got behind the wheel and looked at Carly with a mischievous glance,

'Ready'

'Oh yeah,' Carly whispered, 'Port Charles, here I come.'

\*\*\*\*\*A house in the Caribbean\*\*\*\*\*

A phone blaring disturbed his sleep, he reached blindly in the dark for the phone that was buried underneath dirty clothes

'Yeahâ€|what? I don't do this anymoreâ€|where did you get this number? What? You're positive. Okay, I'll call you on the plane. I'll be there in the next twenty-four hours.'

Sonny Corinthos slammed the phone back onto the receiver.

'Dammit Jason!'' He got up and reached for his clothing. 'well, I guess it's time to go back to home sweet home.'

\*\*\*\*\*A mansion in upstate New York\*\*\*\*\*

'So I assume we're finally in agreement madam?'' The older gentlemen puffed on his cigar. He looked up from his desk at the most unusual woman standing before him. 'We should be ready to hit Port Charles full force within one week.'

'Excellent. We are in full agreement sir,' Helena's eyebrows arched into what could only be described as Satan's most evil face. 'Personally I can not wait. To borrow a clichÃ© from your people, the residents of Port Charles will never know what hit them.'

\*\*\*\*\*Luke and Laura's place\*\*\*\*\*

Lucky and Nikolas were still sitting on the couch working at the pc. They working amiably enough when the door swung open. The boys swung around to see something they never really thought they would see together. Luke Spencer stood in the doorway, cigar clenched between his teeth

'Honey I'm home'

Preview

Katie gives Jason a piece of her mind.

Sonny and Carly meet.

Luke finds his life in shambles.

What exactly does Helena have planned?

Thanks!!

Hi everyone! I'm sure that my next post will be on Saturday, It'll be under a new heading. Thanks again for reading, and feedback is greatly appreciated. This chapter should be very long.

In chapter three, Katie is keeping a secret from Carly. Luke will try to keep his world together. By the way, Lucky and Nikolas are at Laura's house to visit Lulu, she's taking a nap however so they decided to work on Emily's problem, (sorry had to justify it somehow, chalk it up to sloppy writing).

Enjoy!

### Chapter Three

\*\*\*Katie's car\*\*\*

Katie and Carly have been talking non-stop since they left Ferncliff. Carly had just finished telling Katie about Robin. After talking about Robin and Jason, Carly was as usual, ready to shoot someone...again. When she looked up at Katie with nostrils flaring, she was surprised to see that Katie had a pretty calm, if agitated expression.

'Well, what do you think?' Carly said, trying not to get annoyed.

'I hate her'

'Oh, well that's reassuring. But the Katie I know doesn't make snap judgments, that's my job.' Carly said with a small grin on her face.

'Well, while I was waiting for clearance to come through to get you released, I did a little snooping,' Carly's eyes widened in surprise, 'Don't look so shocked Caroline. I thought I'd need to know a few things before you came into the situation. I took up a bogus enrollment in a couple of Robin's classes. She was so arrogant. She had no right to be. I mean she's obviously slightly intelligent.'

Carly snorted and rolled her eyes, 'Well she didn't get into Yale or Harvard or whatever because she's the patron saint of Port Charles,' she bit her lip thoughtfully, 'or maybe she did.'

'ANYWAY, she's so so in the smarts department, but she's in way over her head for pre-med. She has no friends. It seems the normal, average, everyday college student is really annoyed with Miss Ivy League. I also checked out their living situation' Katie hesitated,

'do you really want to know?''

Carly sighed deeply. Inside her heart she knew that Jason didn't love her. Actually her heart even told her that she didn't love Jason. But her head, well it was telling an entirely different story. That calculating mind of Carly's never wanted to lose, especially to Robin. She knew Jason and Robin were living happily ever after with her son, but her mind didn't want to admit that.

'I guess I'll eventually have to deal with it, so spit it out.'

'Ookay, I'm sure you know that Brenda Barrett died...well Jason, Robin, and Michael are living in the four bedroom cottage she used to own.'

Katie let this sink in. If she knew Carly, this news would absorb into her brain and the anger would multiply, eventually exploding and harming almost everyone in her path. But since Katie was there, she would be able to talk Carly down from her rampage and plan a much better source of revenge.

'HOW DARE SHE!' Carly exploded, startling Katie from her thoughts, 'She testifies for TONY, the mad man psycho babystealing doctor, strings Jason along like a kite, makes him a Robin loving oatmeal-brained robot, plays mommie to MY child and decided to move him out of the only home he has ever known? I'm going to wring her little neck! I'm going to pluck out the rest of her eyebrows!'

'CAROLINE!' Carly eventually stops ranting, after a few choice curse words, 'I know your anger is justified against Robin, but isn't there someone else you should be getting mad at?'

Carly looked down at her hands, becoming fascinated with her nails. 'Yea I suppose there is.'

'Yea Caroline, I KNOW there is. One thing I am requiring you to do before we get back to Port Charles is to give up on the Blond Mafioso. I agree that he must have been something wonderful, but believe me he's not anymore. Caroline, he could have gotten you out long ago if he had used the right strings. He's not superintelligent, but he should have known what to do. He chose not too. Doesn't that tell you something?'

'Yea, I suppose it does. Lets not talk about it. I just need time to tell myself to give up. You know it doesn't happen easily.'

Katie smiled, happy to know that Carly was coming to grips with reality about that Morgan guy. 'I know Caroline. Just make sure you don't become a whimp around his baby blues, OK?'

'Ok. Let's talk about what you've been doing. Are you finished with the training?'

'Yea, actually I was already temporarily suspended.'

'You're kidding? I was so looking forward to telling everyone that my best friend is a super spy.'

'Caroline, I'm not a super spy, I'm in the lowest ranks of the WSB. And you know that you can't tell anyone, 'Katie looked at Carly with genuine concern and anxiety.

'Don't worry, I haven't even told anyone about you. They would think I was even crazier,' Carly's face softened as it always does around Katie. 'So...did you find what you were looking for yet?'

Katie looked out on the road with apprehension, she didn't really want Carly to know what she found just yet. 'I don't think I'll tell you right now, you have enough on your mind. Let's talk about how we're getting Michael.'

Carly accepted Katie's secrets. She knew that she would find out eventually. Her thoughts turned happily towards seeing her baby boy. 'What do you mean how? Jason will just have to let me see him, I'm Michael's mother, he can't refuse.'

'Exactly, but you're not staying at the fairytale cottage tonight. I made arrangements to have the old penthouse set up for us for a little while.' Katie smiled.

'Really?? Oh Katie-did, thank you so much. That's perfect.' Caroline grinned.

'By the way Caroline, I try to go by Kate now, no Katie-dids, not Katies, just Kate.'

'Well I go by Carly now Katie'

'Kate, Caroline'

'Carly, Katie'

Katie smirked at this ridiculous turn in conversation. She really missed Caroline. 'Fine, Katie and Caroline.'

Carly's grin got even wider, 'Good Katie...thank you for everything.'

Katie smiled, 'Just paying you back for everything you've done for me.'

\*\*\*\*Thirteen years ago, Katie's back yard\*\*\*\*

Caroline Bensen rounded the corner and looked for Katie Thomas. The two girls had been inseparable for the past two months. There was a four-year age difference, but the girls didn't seem to mind. They both learned a lot from each other. Caroline was finding a calmer side of her personality, and Katie was finding a stronger side.

As Caroline walked into the back yard she saw a girl her age, maybe ten years old, towering over Katie.

'You stupid little brat, I told you never to touch my stuff. Just because your idiot mom died, doesn't mean I have to feel sorry for you.'

'Leave me alone, you're stupid and mean!' Katie said looking at the girl with eyes of fury, something that she would have never done two



months ago.

Obviously the older girl did not like this new, stronger side of Katie, she pushed her down on the ground, ''This is my house and you're just a poor beggar. You're mom deserved to die only bad things happen to bad people. You must have been really stupid and bad. Maybe you killed your mother!''

Caroline couldn't stay quiet any longer. She walked up behind the screaming girl, ''You just SHUT your MOUTH!!!'' she slapped the girl in the face, and repeatedly pushed her until her back was against a fence. ''If you ever touch Katie again, I'll do a lot more than slap your face. Leave her the hell alone!''

The older girl ran into the house, leaving Caroline to help Katie off the ground. ''Are you okay?'' Caroline's face softened and she brushed the dirt off of Katie's back.

''Yea, thank you Caroline,'' the little girl started to cry for the first time that day, ''Do you...think that what she said was true? Did I kill my mommy? Did I deserve to lose her?''

''No, I think that sometimes things happen, and it's no one's fault,'' Caroline's ten year old soul tried to articulate what it knew. That life is uncontrollable, she wasn't to blame for her mother giving her up just as much as Katie wasn't to blame for her mother's death. But as much as her heart and soul believed it, she couldn't make her head believe it.

''You're my best friend in the world Caroline''

''I know, you're mine too.''

\*\*\*\*Luke and Laura's place\*\*\*\*

Luke just stared, Lucky just stared and Nikolas just stared, no one knew what to say or do. The silence was deafening and everywhere until someone's angry voice cut through the silence.

''What the hell are you doing here?''

Nikolas' mind woke up and he looked around for who said it, Lucky hadn't, and surprisingly neither had Luke. Laura was standing on the steps, rage and tears filling her eyes.

''Excuse me darlin, I live here.''

''Not anymore.'' Laura said with calm resolve.

''Let me get this straight, when I left, you were apologizing, now you're kicking me out of my own house?'' Luke was obviously startled, he never expected to see his son and Nikolas in the same room without them killing each other and he certainly never expected to see his wife so angry.

''When you left Luke, DARLIN, I had two long months to think about everything. I realized that I am not to blame for believing that you were dead, I was not to blame for moving on with my life. I was not to blame for having a child. Just like you never took the blame for moving on and sleeping with other people. You're such a hippocrate

Luke. And you know what I deserve better than a hippocrate. If you don't leave I will.'

'If that's the way you feel about it, I'll leave. I'd like to see my daughter though, 'Luke was trying to remain calm, trying not to let the fact that his world was crumbling creep into his brain.

'She's upstairs. Lucky, please come and get me when he's gone.'

'Sure thing Mom' Laura left, Lucky looked up at his father.

Luke had hoped to see something in his eyes, some sort of forgiveness, he only saw the cold hard truth, his son hated him. He didn't know what to do, he swallowed the small lump in his throat, and muttered, 'Cowboy, whatcha doing with the Prince of Darkness over there'

'Enough with the cowboy crap Dad, this is Nikolas, he's my brother. I'm having a normal afternoon with my brother. Do you got a problem with that?'

Luke didn't know what to say anymore. All the anger he felt in the last few months couldn't justify the hurt in his son's eyes. Lucky shook his head with clear exasperation and looked at Nikolas, 'I need some air, I'll be back in a few minutes.'

Nikolas nodded dumbly. In the past few minutes he had seen a man he had been taught to hate since birth, fall apart. This man's life just exploded around him. He should have felt some satisfaction, but he only felt sadness. Luke looked around him, tears welling up in his eyes. His gaze finally settled on Nikolas. It wasn't a pleading look, just a look of pure despair.

Lulu suddenly bounded down the stairs. 'Daddy!'

'Hey baby girl, did you miss me?' He held Lulu in his arms and gave a pleading look towards Nikolas.

Nikolas nodded and joined Lucky on the porch. Leaving Luke to enjoy the only joy left in his life...his daughter.

\*\*\*\*Jason and Robin's cottage\*\*\*\*

Jason had just plopped down on the couch. This feeling of despair had been with him all day. It had been with him the moment he left Ferncliff. He had left Carly so hopeful, when really there was little hope left at all. He knew he couldn't do anything to help her. She was on her own. He had never experienced failure before, and was wondering how he would handle the devastation he felt.

He knew Michael needed a mother. He knew that Robin was happy to be Michael's mother. So he had just let it happen. He hated himself for it. He broke a promise, and then he lied to Carly about it. He told Michael everyday that Carly loved him. He showed him a picture of Carly and said she'd be home soon. He broke that promise to Michael too. But he would try to compensate. He would have Robin be Michael's mother.

He had never felt so trapped in all his life. How would he tell Carly

this? He knew she wouldn't just accept it. She would do anything to get out, to get to her son, including getting help from the Quartermaines. But when she eventually got out, how would Robin deal with losing Michael as her son? For the first time in months all the problems that were bound to surface in Jason's happy life had appeared and he honestly didn't know what to do. He felt so lost and angry and sad. A tear ran down his cheek, he hadn't even realized he was so close to crying.

'What's the matter Jason? Miss me?'

Jason looked up to this familiar voice. He nearly jumped out of his skin to see Carly. Carly with obvious anger written all over her face. Next to Carly was a tall girl with black hair, her hands were on her hips and she looked almost as angry as Carly. The now familiar feeling of not knowing what to do came into his head.

'...Carly?'

To be continued...

\*\*\*Jason's and Robin's cottage\*\*\*

Jason knew he wasn't one for hallucinating. And the anger on Carly's face was real enough. And how in the world could he imagine the girl standing next to Carly. No, this was definitely real. He opened his mouth to speak, something had to be said.

'Don't bother Jason, we'll argue plenty later, believe me. Where is my son?'

'Upstairs, first door on the left,' Jason answered dryly. She knew. She knew he was helpless and the fact that she knew made him feel utterly worthless. He looked at the girl Carly had left at the doorway. His expression was that of complete defeat, yet worry had been lifted from his eyes momentarily.

Katie's anger softened at Jason's despair. She wasn't prepared for this man to be human. Everything would be easier if he didn't have emotions. 'Mr. Morgan,' she said crisply, 'I'm Kate Thomas. Carly and I have been friends for thirteen years. I arranged for Carly to be released. I take it Ms. Scorpio isn't upset with Michael.'

'No she had a study session tonight, I'm sorry how did you get Carly out?'

'Does it matter?' Katie asked, the anger returning, 'the only thing that really matters is that you didn't. How long were you going to let her rot in prison? Until Michael was completely used to having a new mother. Until he could talk and call someone else mama?'

'I think that is something I need to talk to Carly about'

'See, I don't think so. It would only upset her. And I want to keep anything that would make Caroline upset away from her for a little while. She's been through enough. Maybe a true friend would see that.'

A surge of anger swept through Jason, mostly anger at himself, but it directed itself at this girl. 'I think you shouldn't talk about

things you don't know about. You don't know anything about Carly and me.'

'Excuse me but I know everything. I know that you agreed to help her, and did your best. I also know that you judge her, try to control her, and have violated her trust.'

'I have not done anything like that...'

'Are you really that blind? How did you think Carly would take it when you told her you had moved her son out of the only home he had ever known? That you had provided a new mother for him? Did you think she would just accept the fact that you had given up on trying to get her out?'

'Enough! I don't know you. What the hell do you want from me?'

'Jason leave her alone!' Carly had appeared on the steps with Michael in her arms. 'Katie has done more for me than you could ever understand. That is all you need to know about that.'

Panic crept onto Jason's face when he saw that Michael had his jacket on and Carly had a travel bag of Michael's clothes. His next words came out in waves of fear and anxiety, 'Where are you taking him?'

'To the penthouse.'

'Carly you can't just do that, he needs me, he's not used to you.'

'He'll get used to me Jason, I'm his mother!'

'Dammit Carly! Listen to me!' the rage in Jason's voice exploded in the small room, Michael began to whimper.

Katie grabbed the bag from Carly's arm and said with quiet resolve, 'Caroline take Michael to the car.'

Carly brushed past Jason and hushed Michael, who had become happily engrossed in playing with Carly's hair.

'Mr. Morgan, don't ever yell at Caroline like that again. If you know what's best for Michael and Carly, which I believe you do, you'll get in the car and spend the night at the penthouse with us. Then you won't have to worry about Michael. And maybe you and Caroline can talk about his rationally.'

Jason's fear had turned into true despair. tears trickled out of his eyes as he picked up a stuffed animal that had fallen out of the travel bag.

'You know,' he said quietly, 'Carly got this for him before he was born. She wanted to have Christmas presents in the house or something'

Once again, Katie's anger subsided at the sight of Jason's emotion. She said in a kind, gentle voice, 'Carly does not want to take Michael away from you. She just wants to make sure Michael isn't

taken away from her. I think it's most important for the three of you to be together right now. I don't think Robin Scorpio fits into the equation.'" she sighed. "I've had the penthouse set up for us. Please come later tonight."

She left Jason alone, hoping that he would see the logic in her plea. Jason sat on the couch with the stuffed animal and began to write Robin a note.

\*\*\*Luke's and Laura's house\*\*\*

Luke was walking down the steps after putting Lulu back down for her nap. Laura was waiting on the couch.

"Luke, I know my decisions may have surprised you. But I've had two months to think about everything, and this really is the best. I can't be blamed for what happened eighteen years ago. They were events that were out of my control," Laura spoke with a calm, even voice. "What do you want from me?" Luke asked with tears in his eyes.

"I want you to stop punishing yourself and me for things that happened so many years ago. I want you to accept the fact that Nikolas is my son, he's Lucky's and Lesley Lu's half brother. Nothing that you do can change that," Laura looked at Luke with pleading eyes. He put his head down and slowly walked out the door, leaving Laura to burst into tears.

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Carly and Katie enter through the front door of the Penthouse with Michael's things, and a few bags that were Katie's.

"It's freezing in here Katie."

"Yea, I think I'll go down and have the manager put the heat on and then I'll go get some food."

"Sounds good to me, sound good to you Mikey?" Carly laughed when her son grabbed her hair again squealed with delight.

"I think he agrees. Bye carrot-top!" Katie ruffles Michael's hair playfully. "I'll be back soon."

After Katie leaves, Carly begins to arrange things around the penthouse. She sees that a playpen has been placed in the living room and she puts Michael in it. After ten minutes she notices that the room has gotten warmer, and she reaches for Michael. "Hey Mister Man, want Mommy to take off your coat for you? Yea, don't want you to get too hot now do we..."

As Carly takes off Michael's coat, she chatters with him cheerfully. He makes happy noises in response to her every sentence. She doesn't notice that someone has come into the penthouse. He stares at her antics with Michael and a slow smile comes onto his face. When she still hasn't turned around after a minute or two, he makes a polite coughing sound.

Carly turns around sharply at this intruder. She doesn't recognize the face and a look of total anger comes over her face.

'Who the HELL are you?'

OK, that's all for Chapter Three. Coming up in Chapter Four and Five...

Robin interrupts that Penthouse sleepover.

Sonny and Carly 'bond'.

Katie and Jason reach a compromise.

Luke comes to a decision.

Thanks again for reading!!!

## Chapter Four

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

'Who in the hell are you?' Carly demands once again. She places her hands on her hips with nostrils flared.

'You must be Carly Roberts,' Sonny said with an amused raise of his eyebrows.

'Yeah, and you must be a deaf idiot, because you still haven't answered my question. In case you are as dumb as you look, I'll spell it out for you, PRIVATE PENTHOUSE, now get the hell out of here,' Carly huffed and tossed her hair and crossed her arms in front of her chest.

Sonny looked appreciatively at this blond knockout, Jason sure knew how to pick them. She was wearing a dark blue pair of jeans and a white t-shirt (she hadn't gotten a chance to change yet, but at least the P shirt was gone). Her golden hair was the brightest thing in the dark penthouse. Sonny's eyes were glued to that angry, defiant face, the expression almost reminded him of Brenda.

No, this girl would wipe the floor with Brenda. Carly was standing protectively in front of Michael, and the expression she wore told the world that she would never back down.

'I'm sorry,' Sonny smiled, his eyes turning into torches that would melt and woman's heart. 'I'm Sonny.'

Carly's heart however, did not melt at the sight of those smiling chocolate brown eyes; in fact she seemed to be annoyed by them.

'I don't give a damn. I told you to get out.'

'My name is Sonny Corinthos. I used to live here.'

'Used to is the key word. I live here, so why don't you justâ€¦' suddenly the wheels in Carly's head clicked together, Corinthos. Her expressive face clearly showed her surprise. Her voice mirrored the shock and surprise on her face when she said, 'Sonny Corinthos?'

\*\*\*Docks\*\*\*

Nikolas and Lucky were walking in a fog of silence. They were supposed to meet Liz and Emily at Kellys. Their walk from Luke and Laura's house had been utterly quiet. Nikolas had been relatively quiet. Nikolas had quietly asked Lucky if he was okay, to which Lucky had given a gruff no in response.

The boys walked into the crowded diner and found Liz and Emily sitting at a table. Emily was vigorously stirring a cup of coffee, whereas Liz was absently toying with her food. Emily was the first to see the boys, and she let out of a gasp of relief.

'It took you guys long enough,' she said in a nervous voice as the boys sat down.

'Sorry Emily, we were a bit distracted,' Nikolas said quietly, looking at Lucky who was staring at the salt and peppershakers.

'Well I have news, and it doesn't look like it's going to be good news,' Emily lowered her voice. 'I got a note.'

'What did it say?' Lucky spoke for the first time.

'Here look,' Emily took an envelope out of her purse and handed it to Lucky and Nikolas.

The note was just a simple sheet of paper that had two typewritten sentences on it.

The only way you can stop me is to pay. Stop snooping around or you will get hurt

'How could he have known?' Nikolas asked.

'He must have had some type of security features on his web page. I should have been more careful. We'll have to track him down some other way,' Lucky said with anger in his voice. Anger, Emily noted, that could not possibly have been created for this blackmailer. She knew her friend well enough to know that anger came from somewhere else, but where?

'We could start at the beginning,' Nikolas offered.

'The beginning?' Emily asked.

'Yea, where were most of the studio pictures taken, who was on the staff. We'll have to get into the agency somehowâ€|'

'And kind of go under cover,' Emily finished Nikolas' sentence. He nodded. She put on a brave face. 'As long as this whole ordeal is over soon.'

'Well count me out,' for the first time Liz spoke. Tears and anger were equally mixed in her wavering voice.

'Elizabeth?' Lucky forgot his own trouble for a little while to focus on whatever pain she was experiencing.

'Emily can I talk to you outside?' Nikolas asked tactfully. Emily

nodded and they made their way outside. Liz finally looked up from her food at Lucky, with tears in her eyes.

'Lucky, my parents are coming to Port Charles. They found outâ€¦about the rape.'

\*\*\*Robin's Cottage\*\*\*

Robin walks into the dark cottage, surprised to find no one around to welcome her home.

'Jason? Are you here? Hello?'

She turns on the lamp and sees a note taped to the lampshade.

Carly was released, she and I are spending the night with Michael at the penthouse. Don't worry and please don't follow me. I love you.

Robin re-reads the note and tears form in her eyes. The despair and fear she had been trying to deny for the past few months were finally rearing their ugly heads. She had to finally face reality. It was a reality that made her skin crawl. Carly Roberts had returned to reclaim her life.

It was something that Robin would not give up without a fight. She threw her books down and ran out towards the car. She was heading to the penthouse to bring Michael and Jason home where they belong.

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

'Sonny' Carly repeated, the venom returning in her voice  
'Corinthos.'

'Yea' Sonny said unassuredly. He couldn't help but feel that he had missed a beat. He thought that Carly wasn't mad at him anymore, but the anger was building up in her eyes again.

'You know, you could have said that in the first place instead of scaring the crap out of me,' Carly said, placing her hands on her hips again. And, she thought, you could have prevented me from making a fool out of myself.

'Look I'm sorry. But you really didn't give me much of a chance thoughâ€¦'

'What are you doing here anyway? Jason's out of the mob, Brenda's dead, you don'tâ€¦'

Sonny interrupted with a quiet voice that seemed to cut straight through Carly's angry words.

'Brenda's dead?'

Carly's mind once again clicked into place, her face lost all anger and she stuttered her next words, 'I'm so sorry.'

Sonny dropped his bag at the door and slowly walked up the steps to his room. Carly slowly turned to Michael.



'Learn from Mommy Michael, putting your foot in you mouth is no fun.'

\*\*\*Kelly's\*\*\*

'What do you mean Elizabeth? How did they find out?'

Liz scoffed and rolled her eyes. 'Sarah.'

'What does this mean?' Lucky barely whispered.

'They want me to go home with them Lucky, back to Colorado,' Liz said quietly, looking at her hands.

'Are you going to?'

'I don't know anymore. I don't know where my life is anymore. Their flight comes tomorrow. Gram wants me home in fifteen minutes. I'm sorry Lucky, but you'll have to find another place to stay for a little while,' Liz said, her voice breaking.

Lucky put her hands in his and looked at her face. 'It's okay Elizabeth. Everything is going to be fine. Let's get you home.'

\*\*\*Docks\*\*\*

'So he came home and your mom kicked him out?' Emily asked, suddenly understanding where Lucky's anger was coming from.

'Yes, it was pretty bad Emily. I mean I felt sorry for Luke.'

'Wow.'

Emily and Nikolas were sitting on a bench in front of Kelly's. They didn't notice when a young girl with black hair came out of the diner. The girl saw Nikolas and froze in her place. Eventually she gathered her wits about her and she stood around the corner listening to Nikolas and Emily's conversation.

'I feel worse for Lucky though, I mean he was just starting to talk to our mother and then Luke comes back, Lucky's world was just tossed into the air,' Nikolas said with sympathy in his voice.

'You really care about Lucky, don't you?' Emily asked cautiously.

Nikolas thought about this for awhile. He finally answered with calm resolve, 'Yes, he's my brother. No matter what, we have the same blood running through our veins. I can't let some old debt or family rivalry stop me from loving my brother.'

At this point Lucky and Elizabeth walked out of the diner.

'It's time we started to get Elizabeth home. Tomorrow, Emily maybe we can meet at your house and start planning again.'

'Okay. Are you okay Lizzie?' Emily asked with concern filling her

eyes.

'Yea, I'm fine. I just need to get home.'

The foursome started to walk towards Liz's house. Leaving the eavesdropper behind, Katie had tears in her eyes and appeared to be deep in thought. She bit her lip and followed them.

## Chapter Five

\*\*\*Street on the docks\*\*\*

Liz, Lucky, Nikolas and Emily had been walking quietly since they left Kelly's. Katie wasn't too far behind, hoping to catch another piece of their conversation. She could sense however that each person was suffering from some inner torment, more than just teen angst. It seemed as if all four young people were unknowingly holding on for dear life.

Katie knew three of them. Being Caroline's friend has taught her the dangers of jumping into situations blindly. When she and Caroline schemed together, Katie had to take a step back and review the entire situation, because Caroline certainly never did. And of course being a WSB agent required planning and research. Katie had been researching the people of Port Charles since she started training for WSB when she was sixteen.

Katie looked at the youngest girl, Emily Bowen-Quartermaine. Katie knew all about her mother, the drug problem, and even her adoptive father's drug problem. But that girl was a survivor. There was a cold steel wall in her eyes that was partially hidden by the sympathetic brown. Katie recognized it because it was in her own eyes.

Katie looked to the tall, blond form of Lucky Spencer. Everyone in the WSB had to learn about Luke Spencer and the Ice princess saga. They were told that he was not the kind of person to emulate when in a typical WSB situation. Luke Spencer could turn a jaywalking into a dramatic mess. Katie had tried to learn everything about Luke Spencer, his past, his personality, his tendencies. Katie smiled, thinking that any fool could see that the volatile Luke Spencer was related to Caroline.

Katie could see that Lucky was definitely his father's son. His arrogant, purposeful stride, and his lean, tall imposing figure. His face was set in an angry, defiant glare at no one in particular but the world.

Next to Lucky was the face she didn't recognize. Whoever the girl was, she looked terrified and lost. Her eyes could have had that survivor quality in them, but Katie couldn't see because of the fear that clouded Liz's eyes.

And then there was Nikolas. Standing tall and proud in all of his Cassadine glory. His arrogant stature collided directly with the tender conversation Katie had overheard earlier. The WSB had continual surveillance on the Cassadines. When Katie joined the WSB, she showed specific interest in the Cassadine's ongoing case, which is probably the reason she was never assigned to the case. Her supervisors thought she was a little obsessed with the 'bad guy'.

Well now Katie was walking undetected behind the bad guy. She couldn't help but see how much he looked likeâ€¦

'Oh my God,' Emily gasped, breaking into Katie's thoughts. 'The letter, I don't have it.'

'Did you drop it?' Nikolas asked.

'No, I don't know we have to find it,' Emily said desperately.

'Em, calm down,' Lucky said, running his hands through his hair. 'I think I may have left it at Kelly's.'

Emily let out a small sigh and Nikolas said, 'It's okay Emily. I'll go get it. Be right back.'

Nikolas began to jog back in the direction they had just come from. Causing Katie to frantically hide. The only available place was behind a bunch of leaking trashcans. Unfortunately, Katie was still in her 'psychiatrist' garb she had worn earlier that day at Ferncliff. She ripped the jacket of her business suit and got quite a few runners in her stockings. The two-inch heels she was wearing did not make crouching very easy. She could smell the garbage slime creep into one of her good undercover outfits. 'Dammit,' she thought. 'This is what I get for being a rookie.'

When Katie thought the coast was clear, she struggled to get up. She saw that Nikolas had disappeared, but know a figure in black was approaching the group that Nikolas had left behind.

\*\*\*Luke's office\*\*\*

Luke sat at his desk, with an unopened bottle of whiskey in his hands. He had been sitting there for hours. It had taken him quite a few hours to fully understand what had happened to his life this morning. When he left Port Charles, he had held all the cards. Now he came back to see that his wife had turned into a tower of strength, directed against him. And he'd be damned if he find this Laura's new strength attractive.

He wanted his wife back, but the price he would have to pay for her was so high. Accepting the Cassadine spawn or who he is. Stefan's son. Luke looked at the pictures on his desk. It was a Spencer family gallery. There was even a picture of Carly.

Luke's eyes settled on a picture of Lucky, Laura, a newborn Lulu and himself. No matter how mad Lucky was, he was still a good kid. He had Laura's compassionate heart. And Lesley Lu, she was a miniature version of Laura.

Nikolas was half of Laura. Luke saw that side of him today. Nikolas could have gotten satisfaction of Luke's situation. Instead he did what Laura would have done; he had given Luke respect and compassion.

Luke sighed and rubbed his temples. He knew this day would come eventually, he would have to act like a grown-up. He scowled at the thought and it looked as though he was going to throw the bottle of

whiskey at the wall. After a moment, he put the bottle down and picked up a picture of Laura.

'Darlin,' he smiled, 'I'm coming home.'

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Carly was playing with Michael on the couch. She felt horrible for what she had said to Sonny. She had thought about going upstairs to apologize, but decided against it. 'Just another person to add to the I hate Carly list' she mused. If she went upstairs to apologize, she would probably get a door slammed in her face. Well Sonny and Robin would have a great time talking about her shortcomings now.

'Oh Michael, what am I going to do with myself?' Carly asked her son. 'Mommy always messes up. Don't I?'

Michael giggled and grabbed Carly's hair.

'You don't mind though do you Mister man? No but I do,' Carly bites her lip and thinks. 'I have to make everything better for you. I have to tell AJ.'

'Yea, right like Carly Roberts would ever tell the truth.'

Carly turned around to see Robin Scorpio smiling smugly.

\*\*\*Dock's\*\*\*

Before Katie could assess the situation, the stranger rushed Lucky and put him in a headlock. Katie guessed that he was holing a knife Lucky's throat.

'Oh my god, Lucky,' Liz gasped. Emily turned and a flash of recognition crossed her face.

'Tom?' Emily yelled. 'What are you doing?'

'Shut up or your little friend's gonna get cut,' Tom said his grip tightening on Lucky's throat, making him choke.

'Just do what he says Emily, stay away from him,' Luck gasped, hating the helpless situation he has suddenly found himself in.

'That's right ladies, Listen to what I say, not a word, understand, not a word to anyone.'

From that point on, Katie had a hard time following the action and planning an attack, because Liz rushed forward at Tom, with Emily desperately trying to stop her. Tom threw Lucky to the ground, hitting his head against a box. Liz started to attack Tom, but quickly recoiled once the knife struck her arm.

'You b\*st\*rd, I'm going to kill you,' Liz screamed. Emily had rushed to the unconscious Lucky.

'You little brat, you just scratched my face,' Tom said while picking up his knife. 'Oh I remember you, the pretty little thing

from the park.'

Liz ran off for another charge at Tom when Katie finally made her move. Katie kicked at Tom, her foot and two-inch heel finding the back of his skull. Tom went flying to the ground, where Liz followed punching and hitting Tom. She finally stopped in a desperate search for Tom's knife. Katie took this opportunity to physically restrain Tom.

'Where's the knife?' Liz cried hysterically.

Katie turned her head to Emily, who was finally succeeding in waking Lucky. 'Will you please calm her down?' Katie hissed. She turned her attentions back to Tom, only to have her jaw meet Tom's fist. Tom grabbed the knife that was near him and backed Katie into a corner.

'Maybe somebody shouldn't have tried to be a hero,' Tom said cryptically. 'I'm going to cut that pretty face of yours.'

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

'Welcome back Carly,' Robin sneered.

'I really need to get new locks on these doors,' Carly groaned, picking up Michael protectively, 'Get the hell out of here Robin.'

'Really Carly, Jason and I don't swear around Michael,' Robin walks closer to Carly, reaching out to Michael. 'Do we Mikey, no.'

Michael, who normally tolerates Robin's presence, gets antsy when Robin reaches. He begins to whine softly and wriggle away from Robin's touch. Carly laughs at this.

'That's my boy. Don't like the little pixie do you?' Carly smirks at Robin. 'By the way princess, like your haircut.'

'Shut up Carly!' Robin hisses. 'You know what, I don't really care about you or your bastard son. The only thing that matters is that Jason's in my bed every night.'

'Robin, I don't give a damn where Jason sleeps, please leave, 'Carly says quietly, turning her back on Robin.

'Does it bother you Carly? That he chose me? He chooses me over you and your little brat. Do you know why? Because you're a stupid slut. You can't even function in the world without screwing someone's life up. And Jason's sick of cleaning up after you! You're an idiot thatâ€|'

'Robin!' Robin spun around to see Jason in the doorway.

\*\*\*Dock's\*\*\*

'You know that wouldn't be a very good idea.' Katie said darkly.

'No, I think it's a good one. If you hadn'tâ€|'' Tom's words were interrupted by a wooden board smacking him on the head.

Katie looked up and said, 'Oh thank goodness, Nikolas!'' She jumped up off the ground and hugged a startled Nikolas.

'Lizzie, you're bleeding,' gasped Emily. And Liz was bleeding; her shirtsleeve was soaked in blood.

Katie let go of Nikolas and got down on the ground with Liz, Katie tore off a piece of her jacket (that was already torn) and applied it to Liz's wound.

'There's a really deep cut. You need to make sure no nerves or muscles were cut.' Katie said calmly. Tying Liz's arm with another strip of fabric. She looked back at Emily, 'Could you call an ambulance and the police station, ask for Detective Taggart.'

Emily nodded dumbly and starting to make calls on her cell phone. Lucky slowly made his way over to Liz, 'Elizabeth? Are you okay?' Liz only stared of into space.

'She's in shock,' Katie said sharply.

Lucky grabbed Elizabeth's free hand, 'Come on Elizabeth, wake up.'

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

'Jason?' Robin did a 180-degree personality change. 'It's about time you got here. I think Carly is upsetting Michaelâ€|'

'I had to pick some things up,' Jason interrupted, the confusion clearly evident on his face. 'What are you doing here?'

'I was worriedâ€|'

'Didn't you see the note I left?' Jason said bluntly, 'I told you not to follow me.'

'I must have missed it,' Robin lied.

'She's lying' thought Jason, who then said, 'Well it's not a good idea for you to be here right now.'

'What are you saying Jason?' Robin said with tears in her eyes.

'Go home Robin,' Jason said coldly.

'Fine, you know what, just fine. I'll leave you here Jason. But when you get sick of Carly's lies, I'll be at the cottage,' Robin huffed out of the penthouse.

Jason put his bags down and started after Robin, 'Robin wait.'

Carly had remained turned away from the door since, Robin's tirade.

Tears had been streaming down her face throughout the whole conversation. The door slammed as Jason walked out after Robin, stunning Carly. She just kissed Michael's forehead and said, 'He left us Michael. Just like I knew he would,' Carly laid Michael in his playpen, sat on the couch and cried.

\*\*\*Dock's\*\*\*

Taggart was instructing other officers about Tom, he finished with an exasperated sigh and said, 'Don't let this one get away guys.'

Taggart turned to Katie, and said in a scolding voice, 'Would you like to explain to me how this happened?'

Katie grinned sheepishly and offered, 'Rookie mistake?'

'I didn't even know you were here yet,' Taggart said as he rubbed his head, 'Where are you staying?'

Katie looked down at her shoes and ripped stockings, 'Penthouse,' she said quietly.

'Geez, Thomas. You sure know how to find trouble,' he smiled, 'I'll be there tomorrow, take care of your face, you got one hell of a shiner.'

'Thanks Marcus,' Katie said sweetly. She turned to see Nikolas and Emily talking.

'Lucky went with Liz to the hospital. If you don't mind, could we go with them?' Emily asked the distracted Nikolas.

'Of course. Emily did you know that girl?'

'No, but I'm sure Liz or Lucky knew her. And if not, we'll run into her again. Port Charles is a small town.'

'Yes, you're right,' Nikolas said. And they started off to the hospital.

Katie stood out of Nikolas and Emily's sight and smiled, 'Yea, you'll be seeing me again Nikolas. Don't worry about that.'

\*\*\*The bridge\*\*\*

Jason finally catches up to Robin at the bridge. She turns to him and smiles, 'I knew you would come,' she embraces an uncomfortable Jason.

'Robinâ€|'

'Jason don't say anything, I understand that you felt obligated to Carly and Michaelâ€|'

'Robinâ€|' Jason began quietly.

'Jason I know how Carly used Michael to get to you and it's okay. I forgive you.'

'Robin!' Jason yelled, startling her. 'I heard what you said to Carly. Why did you say those things?'

'Because Jason, it was all true. You may not realize it now, but Carly is bad news for you,' Robin said with panic creeping into her voice, her hands on Jason's chest.

'No Robin, I know what is good and bad for me. Carly is bad news for you!' Jason said, grabbing Robin's hands from his chest, the veins popping out on his forehead. 'Why would you speak for me?'

Robin looked at her hands that Jason had just pushed away from his body and her tears began to fall, 'Because I love you Jason.'

'Robin that's no excuse,' Jason's anger diminishing at the sight of Robin's tears. 'What is happening with you Robin?'

Robin looked at Jason with scared, pitiful eyes, 'Jason, I'm losing you. I'm going to lose you to Carly.'

'Carly is my friend. End of story. There is no way you could lose me to her,' Jason said, anger creeping back into his voice. 'The only person that could make me leave you Robin, is you. And you came really close to it tonight.'

'Jason, why don't we talk about it at home.'

'No Robin, I'm going back to the penthouse.'

Something in Robin's head snapped. The months of disillusionment finally became very clear to Robin. She rolled her eyes and said in a malicious voice, 'To your son right Jason. I hate to be the one to break this to you, but he's AJ's son, not yours, and he never will be yours.'

Jason's eyes clouded over with hate as he looked at this woman he thought he loved. He stopped himself from yelling at her, and turned away to go home.

'Jason!' Robin yelled at his retreating figure. 'Don't leave me alone!'

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Sonny walked down the stairs. When Carly dropped her bombshell, he had gone upstairs to confirm Brenda's death. He had been staring at her picture for the last couple of hours, but he had still not shed a tear. It was as if it couldn't be real, she would come bounding into the penthouse, ranting at him to leave her alone any minute now.

He had left so she would live. The thought that he had caused her so much pain in the last year of her life was eating him alive. As he walked down the stairs, he saw baby Michael sleeping peacefully in his playpen, and Carly was sitting on the couch with her head in her hands. Involuntary sobs escaped from Carly, making her shoulders quiver. She wasn't really crying because Jason had left, it was just that someone had left her again. Carly suddenly felt a strong hand squeezing her shoulder.



Sonny looked down at her with tears in her eyes. Carly sniffled and managed to choke out, ''It hurts when they leave, doesn't it?''

Sonny nodded, the tears finally falling down his face. Carly grasped his hand as he sat down beside her. She wrapped her arms around his waist and placed her head on his chest.

If Sonny was surprised at Carly's tender gesture, he didn't show it. He returned her embrace and placed his cheek on top of her golden head. The both cried for a little while, taking comfort in another human's touch.

Carly said finally, ''I just don't ever want Michael to feel that, like people leave him all the time. You won't leave will you?'' she looked up at him with tear stained eyes.

Sonny shook his head no and said quietly, ''I just wish I could have helped her, she must have been through so much pain.''

They sat with each other's arms wrapped around each other for a little while, as only two people in immense emotional pain could do.

Again Carly looked up, her brown eyes searching Sonny's eyes. She finally said, ''I'm sorry.''

Sonny placed a strand of hair behind her ear, ''Shh, I know, he smiled, ''you know, you have quite a temper.''

''Yea I know,'' she smiled, looking at Michael. ''I should take him up to the nursery.''

''Can I help?'' Carly looked at Sonny with surprise. ''What? He is my namesake. I've already fallen in love with him.''

''Ok,'' Carly smiled at Sonny's thoughtfulness. It didn't seem like he was leaving anytime soon.

\*\*\*Luke's and Laura's House\*\*\*

Luke appears on the steps of the porch with a bunch of daisies in his hand. He stops when he sees Laura sitting on his couch laughing and talking with none other than Stefan Cassadine. His initial reaction is to run in and punch the Count's lights out. Then he remembers his promise to himself, to act like a grown-up. He scowls and drops the daisies on the porch.

''Not going to make this easy for me are you sweetheart,'' Luke said quietly. ''Well, if you want a fight put up for you, that's exactly what you'll get.''

Luke left the porch smiling before the phone rang. Laura answered and was shocked to hear that Lucky and Nikolas were at the hospital. In a few minutes Laura and Stefan were on their way to the hospital for Lucky and Nikolas.

\*\*\*Outside Penthouse\*\*\*

Katie had finally made her way back to the penthouse and was leaving

the elevator when she saw Jason, standing alone in the hallway.

'Mr. Morgan, are you all right?' Katie asked him tentatively.

Jason wiped the tears away and said, 'I'm fine.' He turned to look at Katie and was visibly shocked by her appearance. 'What happened to you? Did someone punch your face?'

Katie self-consciously brought her hand to her face, causing herself more pain. She winced, 'Yea. There was an incident down at the docks. If you have a couple of minutes, I'll fill you in,' she raised the bags she had gotten at Kelly's. 'I picked up some burgers. You're more than welcome to join me.'

Jason, 'Sure, you're names Thomas right?' Katie nodded. 'How do you know Carly?'

'Well that might take more than a few minutes, and maybe a couple more hamburgers,' she smiled, 'I'm glad you came home Mr. Morgan.'

'Yea I guess I am too,' Jason smiled and took another glance at Katie's disheveled appearance. 'Let's get you cleaned up Thomas.'

She smiled, and they entered the penthouse to begin a long night of conversation.

Coming up

How does Taggart know Katie?

Why is Katie so interested in Nikolas?

Will Liz be okay? Will she stay in Port Charles?

Katie and Robin meet. Will Robin survive?

Luke and Carly have a discussion.

Jason and Sonny must make a life changing decision

I hope you guys enjoy this chapter. It's kind of short. Someone asked what the handsome reward was for replying...so I actually had to think about it and I've decided. Some of you know that I have this story planned out in my head, for like the next twenty years...so, if you reply, ask for one thing you want to know will happen. And maybe I'll try to answer you the best I can. (heehhehehe)

Thanks,

KimLee

Chapter 6

\*\*\*Hospital waiting room, 3 am\*\*\*

Lucky had been waiting to see Liz for 4 hours now. The last time he'd

seen her was in the ambulance. He was quietly talking to her, reassuring her that she would be okay. There was no response from Liz throughout the entire ride to the hospital. While they were wheeling her away from Lucky, she finally made a response. She turned her head to look at him, and the pure fear on her face had haunted Lucky's mind for the past few hours.

He had never felt so helpless in all of his life. The girl that could be found in every corner of his heart was in so much pain right now. Nikolas and Emily had come to the hospital shortly after Lucky and Liz came in the ambulance. Each felt extremely uncomfortable in their inability to ease Lucky or Liz's pain. The three teenagers sat in a state of high pitched fear for Liz.

Nikolas had quietly brought up the girl that had helped them once, during the night. Lucky had said quietly that he didn't know her, but he would have to find her to thank her. Nikolas nodded his head slowly in agreement. Then they went back to concentrating on praying for Liz. Not so much her physical well-being. The doctor's had said she would be fine. They were worried about her emotional well-being.

They found some trouble explaining that to their respective parents and guardians. The Quatermaines came bustling in at midnight, Edward still in his pajamas. Emily explained the blackmailing situation the best she could. Edward was especially outraged that Emily had not come to him for help.

'Young lady! I will not have you gadding about town like Nancy Drew with those boys of Laura Spencers. If you would have come to me, I would have given you the money! I knew this modeling business would...'

Emily's quiet voice interrupted her Grandfather's tantrum, she told him to sit down and be quiet or leave. 'One of my best friends in there hanging on to reality by a thin thread, she does not need to hear your ridiculous rantings Grandfather.'

Edward huffed and sat down. AJ tried to cheer him up, but no amount of kissing up would take back Emily's harsh, true words.

Laura and Stefan arrived also, Stefan angry at Nikolas getting himself into such a dangerous situation.

'Really, Nikolas, if you wanted to find some bond with Spencer,' Stefan growled. 'You could have done it in a safer environment.'

Laura looked angry at Stefan, 'And what would you have them tell Emily or Elizabeth, Stefan' she said, anger swelling in her eyes. 'Sorry girls, can't help you today, I have an empire to run in the future?'

Stefan kept quiet after that comment from Laura, afraid to anger her and send her flying back to Spencer's arms. He sat quietly next to Nikolas, and waited for word like the rest of them.

Audrey came running to the waiting area around two thirty in the morning. She had been in emergency surgery for the past few hours, oblivious to Elizabeth's condition. She looked at Lucky, and hissed,

'How could you let this happen Lucky, I trusted you.'

Lucky couldn't say a word in his defense. He did feel as though it were his fault. He should have kept Liz from all of this danger.

Audrey went into Liz's room and had still not come back out by three in the morning. Emily had fallen asleep, her head resting comfortably on Nikolas' shoulder. Lucky was in the same position he had been in for the last few hours. Laura and Stefan were sitting quietly in the corner, occasionally exchanging a few quiet sentences with one another. The Quartermaines had returned home, after much arguing about it.

Lucky looked up as Audrey came back outside. His heart deflated when he saw the look of despair on Audrey's face.

'She's catatonic. The doctor has given her something for it, but she's shown no response, to anything,' Audrey breathed out, and then sunk into the nearest chair, burying her face in her hands, harsh, choking sobs coming from her body.

No one really knew what to do, Laura rose and knelt by Audrey, pulling her face from her hands, they looked into each others eyes, seeing that same survivor quality in each other. Laura whispered, 'It's going to be okay.'

During all of the commotion, Lucky slipped into Liz's room.

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Katie looked at her watch. 3:30 am. She and Jason had been talking for hours, she decided to bake cookies at three in the morning and she and Jason ran to the store for the ingredients. She was pleasantly surprised at the person Jason Morgan had turned out to be. She could see why Caroline was so devoted to him. He looked at the world through the eyes of a fair, honest child. She had told him all about her friendship with Caroline. She had decided to tell him everything when she told Caroline.

Jason looked on as Katie mixed the sugars and butter together. He had come home knowing that he and Robin were over. He hadn't known what he would do with himself. Then this girl, Thomas, with the bruise on her jaw line, and her entertaining stories about Caroline, and her chirpy, cheerful voice, had kept his mind off of Robin for a few hours. He could understand how Katie and Carly had become so close. They were perfect compliments to each other. Where Carly was reckless and impulsive, Katie was thoughtful and practical. They both were very intensely emotional people though, and had a flair for dramatics. Katie even shared some of Caroline's gestures, the tossing of her hair, and the goofy smirk.

'So do you want to know a secret?' Katie smiled, 'A big one?'

Jason looked dubious and then set his face in that unreadable glare that Katie had seen too many times, he finally replied, 'Sure.'

'I'm a WSB agent.' Jason's face registered the same non emotion it had a second ago, Katie grinned sheepishly, 'We are definitely going to have to teach you a new facial expression.'

'Why are you telling me this?' Jason finally spoke, in his cold, detached manner.

'Well...It's something involving you, and Caroline,' Katie said in a business like manner, imitating Jason's mannerisms. 'I'll definitely tell you when she wakes up. I just thought it would be a good idea to tell you now.'

'Is that why you left Florida?' Jason asked, the business like demeanor melting away.

'Yeah' Katie said quietly and looked up with a silly grin, 'Do you want to put the chocolate chips in?'

\*\*\*Three years ago, Florida, Caroline's apartment\*\*\*

A 16 year-old Katie came in quietly, to see Caroline putting things in a box. She grinned sheepishly, and said 'Moving again?'

The twenty year old Caroline looked at Katie angrily and muttered, 'It's not like I have a choice Katie, now do I?'

'Caroline, you know this is important to me, can't you just be happy for me?'

Caroline sighed, picking up a picture of her and Katie from ten years earlier. 'I am happy for you Katie. I know how much you want this. But it's just like another person is leaving again,' the tears fell down her cheeks, 'I just don't want to lose you too.'

Katie ran to Caroline and hugged her. 'I'm sorry Caroline, don't cry. If you don't want me to go I won't. I'll stay here with you.'

Caroline smiled at Katie's childlike display of compassion, 'No, you know you have to go, and I'll survive, if you promise to write and come back and save me someday...I don't know what some secret service people want with a kid like you anyway.'

'Gee thanks Caroline,' Katie smiled. 'It's not like they picked me you know, I stalked them until they noticed me.'

'Yea. Why is this so important Katie? What are you looking for?' Caroline asked, compassion filling her eyes.

'My life Caroline, my family, I don't know...the same things you're looking for.'

Caroline accepted this. Just that morning she had made arrangements to leave for Port Charles. She accepted Katie's decision, and knew that if she promised, Katie would find her someday. She smiled and said quietly, 'You know Katie-did, I can't help but think I'm going to get into a world of trouble without you.'

\*\*\*Hospital\*\*\*

Lucky sneaked into Liz's room and was shocked to see her staring into space with her blue-green eyes that used to be filled with such joy and life. Her eyes showed him nothing now, not even a shred of the Lizzie he had grown to love so much.

'Hey,' Lucky said quietly. 'I know that you're not really here right now. I know you probably don't feel safe anymore, but you are Elizabeth. The guy is gone and he's never ever coming back. And if he does, he'll have to kill me to get to you. You have to wake up Liz, or I think they're going to take you away from me. And I don't think I can survive without you.'

Tears began trickling down his face and he looked at her beautiful face. She slowly turned her head to him and a flash of emotion came into her eyes. Her eyes were suddenly sympathetic, yet they held a purpose in them. Lucky almost understood what she wanted to say.

'What am I doing?' Lucky said running his hands through his hair, and then wiping the tears away. 'I'm being selfish Liz, I'll survive if you need to go. As long as I know you're alive and healthy and learning how to be happy again.' He kissed her cheek, 'I love you Elizabeth.'

He quietly left the room and a single tear ran down Elizabeth's now peaceful looking face.'

\*\*\*Penthouse, 7 am\*\*\*

Katie and Jason had fallen asleep in the living room, Jason was sitting up on the couch, his head tilted back in a very uncomfortable position, while Katie had curled up on the other end of the couch and was sleeping peacefully. Carly walked down the steps in a bathrobe with Michael in her arms, and grinned like a fool at the scene in front of her.

'Look Michael, it's my two favorite people in the world. Daddy,' She gently placed Michael in Jason's lap, where she proceeded to wake him up by pulling on Jason's face. Carly walked over to Katie and pounced on her saying joyfully, 'and Katie!'

Katie jolted up from her place on the couch and remembered her surroundings. She pushed Carly off of her and said, 'You crazy punk,' she laughed and looked at Jason, who woke up to Michael grabbing his lips.

'Hewwo Michaew,' Jason managed to get out. The girls cracked up laughing as Jason picked up Michael and started to tickle him.

The laughing was interrupted by Sonny groggily walking down the steps and mumbling, 'God Jason, you'd think you'd show a little more respect to your houseguests.'

Jason looked up surprised, handed Michael to Carly and exclaimed 'Sonny!' he ran to hug the man he had always hoped would come home, 'What are you doing here?' He asked as he let the poor, sleepy man sit down on the couch.

'Actually,' Katie said, 'I can answer that one.'

The three adults in the room looked at Katie with surprise and confusion as Marcus Taggert walked into the room.

\*\*\*Hospital\*\*\*

Lucky again was waiting in outside of Liz's room. Her parents had arrived not too long ago, and Lucky was certain that they would take Liz home. He was trying to deal with it. He wanted to send Liz away with a positive picture of himself. He knew this was best for Elizabeth. To be with her family. But she was his family.

The door opened and Elizabeth slowly walked out with the aid of her father. He looked at Lucky and said quietly, 'Thank you Lucky, I know you did a lot for Elizabeth. Feel free to call her, or visit.'

'Thank you' whispered Lucky. he looked at Elizabeth's peaceful face, and kissed her cheek again. Lucky smiled and said, 'See you soon Elizabeth.'

She was led out of the door by her father, and she turned to look at Lucky, with a calm, reassuring smile on her face. 'I'll be back,' Liz whispered.

\*\*\*OK, please don't be mad that I sent Liz away, it all works out in the end, eventually. Honest\*\*\*

Coming up:

Katie tells all.

Nikolas and Lucky visit the penthouse.

Carly and Sonny have another encounter

Luke and Laura 'meet again'

Katie and Robin have a confrontation

Helena has a wrench thrown into her plans.

Thanks, and remember please reply!

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Sonny rubbed his eyes again. He had just returned last night, to find an emotional A-bomb waiting to be discovered, a girl who definitely would be nothing but trouble for him. To top it all off he woke up to the sound of shrieking girls and the sore sight of Marcus Taggert.

'What's the matter Corinthos? Not happy to see me?' Taggert drawled, obviously enjoying the fact that Corinthos had no clue.

'Naw, Taggzy. It's the glare that's coming off of your bald head, warn me next time,' Sonny smirked, 'And I'll bring the sunglasses and SPF 30.'

'What are you doing here? Do you have a warrant?' Jason barked, handing Michael to Carly, 'Take Michael upstairs Carly.'

Carly scoffed at Jason and looked at Katie, this had to have something to do with her, neither her, Sonny nor Jason had done anything illegal in the last twenty-four hours. Katie read her expression and quickly spoke up.

'I can explain everything, including him,' she looked unappreciatively at Taggart and said, 'You could have called first.'

Sonny still had a lot of trouble comprehending the situation and blurted out 'Wait a minute! Who in the hell are you?' He asked pointing at Katie.

'Don't talk to her like that,' growled Carly, 'She's my friend and she'll explain it if you would just shut your mouth.'

'Thanks Caroline,' Katie took a deep breath, 'Mr. Corinthos, I'm an agent for the WSB, I'm here in Port Charles not only for a visit with Carly but also for a case. It mostly has to do with the drug explosion that's happened in Port Charles since both you and Mr. Morgan left organized crime. Horrible things are happening.'

'Yea, I know, I received a call about it yesterday morning. That's why I'm here,' Sonny said arrogantly, 'but that still doesn't explain Mr. Clean over there.'

'Look, Kate, I don't have to put up with this,' Taggart began but Katie cut him off with a glare.

'Well, Corinthos, since you asked so politely, I'll tell you what Marcus is doing here,' Katie said with obvious annoyance at the whole ridiculous testosterone battle, 'Officer Taggart is an agent for the WSB, and he's also my partner.'

\*\*\*Hospital\*\*\*

Lucky had been sitting in that chair for hours. Staring straight ahead, eyes devoid of any emotion. He had done his crying hours earlier. He didn't really know where he was going to go. It almost seemed that without her, he had no place or no one to go to. He can't help but feel that Elizabeth needed time to be away, she needed to be somewhere she didn't feel afraid. And when she got won the battle with her fear, she would be back.

He saw Laura coming down the hall, surprisingly a half smile came onto his face. She sat next to him, and reached for his hand and he didn't pull away, he looked at her and whispered, 'She's gone Mom.'

Laura's eyes held tears for her son's pain, she nodded, 'Audrey, told me—are you okay?'

A sound came from Lucky's throat, something not unlike a laugh or a sob. He looked his mother in the eyes and said, 'I have to be, for her.'



'You know Lucky, you can come homeâ€|'' Laura began.

'No Mom,' Lucky interrupted. 'I can't. Not untilâ€|I don't know until you and Dad work everything out, I don't think I would do much good at home.'

Laura's eyes widened at her son's words. 'Lucky, do you know how happy I would be if you came home?'

'Mom, in a couple of days I'll be over the shock of Liz being gone, then I'll be annoying, arrogant Lucky again. I don't think you need to deal with me full time with Dad back in town,' Lucky stated.

Laura was surprised at her son's maturity and intuition. She knew deep down in her heart, he was almost right. She knew not to ask where he would stay, he would only get angry. She said quietly, eyes downcast, 'Can you come for supper once in a while then?'

Lucky looked at his mother, the mother he loved so much and hugged her fiercely. 'You know I will Mom. I love you.'

Laura's tears finally fell down her face as she hugged her suddenly grown up little boy.

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

'Are you kidding?' Sonny exclaimed. 'This putz is a part of the World's Security Bureau?'

'Look Corinthos, if you'll shut your pie hole for five seconds, everything will be explained,' Taggart said, every word saturated with annoyance. 'As if you didn't know, a lot of crazy stuff goes down in Port Charles.'

Sonny makes a duh face at Jason.

'This is the perfect place to have a full time, undercover mole.'

'Undercover?' Jason speaks for the first time. 'The whole PCPD thing is fake?'

'Wow, you're not as drain bamaged as I thought Anger boy,' Taggart says with surprise, 'The whole PCPD isn't fake just me.' Sonny sniggers at this, and Carly elbows him in the ribs. Taggart continues, 'Did you really think I was that much of an idiot to screw up all of those cases?'

'Well now that you askedâ€|'' Sonny smirked.

'Including you' Taggart said icily, 'How do you think you've kept the Port Charles mob for so long? You're the person the WSB wants in charge.'

Sonny lets this register and asks seriously, 'So now what that Moreno's in charge, you want me to take it back?'

Taggart rolls his eyes at Jason, 'Yea, some idiot left the mob and

let one of the most dangerous men ever take over. Real brilliant Morgan.''

Jason's face twitches, which is only noticed by Katie and Carly. Katie decides to interrupt before Carly says something rude to Taggart, ''Well anyway Marcus,'' we want you to have it back. And that's why we're here.''

''It's not going to be easy,'' Sonny says dubiously.

''That's why we're here, Corinthos,'' Taggart says slowly.

''Fine,'' Jason speaks again, '' We'll make some calls, get some muscle behind us. There's nothing else is there?''

Taggart shakes his head no, ''Not that I know of.''

''So let's get started,'' Sonny says.

''Wait,'' Katie says, a sheepish grin crossing her face. ''There's more.''

\*\*\*Luke's\*\*\*

Luke is awakened by a loud banging on his office door. He hobbles over to it and begins to unlock the many Helena-be-gone devices on his door.

''Who is it?'' he grumbles.

''Luke, it's me.''

Luke quickly opens the door to see his wife standing there with tears in her eyes.

\*\*\*Cottage\*\*\*

Robin wakes up from her place on the couch. She rubs her eyes and looks around.

''Jason?'' she calls out. ''Are you here?''

The prior evening's events come rushing back to Robin with full force. Carly's return and Jason's insistence on staying the night at the penthouse. She remembered crumbling into a heap after watching Jason walking out of her life at the bridge. She remembers someone taking her home. He was so concerned, she couldn't remember the face. A timid knock on the door interrupts her thoughts.

''Robin,'' AJ calls out, ''are you okay?''

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

''There's more?'' Sonny says curiously.

''Yea, there's more?'' Taggart says with indignance.

''She said there's more, so shut up, sit down,'' Carly hisses, ''and listen.''

Katie smiles at Caroline. Still the same as she was when she was ten years old. Katie wondered how she would react to her news. She clears her throat.

'There's another factor,' Katie bites her lip. 'Helena Cassadine.'

'That crazy old lady? What could she do?' Taggert says. 'She has no money, WSB gave us the report on that.'

'She has power,' Jason said quietly, 'Influence, she's respected for her cut throat tactics.'

'That's right,' Katie says gathering strength for the big announcement. 'She kills without a second thought. She killed a lot of people—she killed my mother.'

The room was silent for a few moments until Carly looked at her best friend, obviously in a lot of emotional torment, she asked soothingly, 'Katie? What do you mean?'

Katie took another deep breath. These were the people she wanted to tell. The people she had to tell. 'Okay, start from the beginning of what I know for sure. My mother and I lived in Florida, we had moved around a lot, so much that I can't even say where I was before Florida, week to week. My mother finally thought we were safe, so we settled in Florida. Uhh, two weeks after we settle in, I had just turned six years old. My mother said my father was going to be visiting us soon. I was so happy.'

Katie swallowed a lump that had gathered in her throat. She looked at Caroline who was holding Michael, stroking his hair. 'Uhhh, the day came when my father was supposed to visit, I came home from school to find my mother in the house. There were a lot of other people too. She had always told me to run away if there were a lot of people around her. Well, I didn't run away, I stayed and I hid from everyone. There were a lot of men who spoke a different language, and one woman. Helena Cassadine. She was threatening my mother, telling her that she should have never run, it would just cause her more pain. I don't remember the exact words but she said to my mother, 'just thank god you're bastard child died or I'd kill her before your eyes,' then,' Katie's voice cracked and her lip trembled, 'She held a knife to her throat and cut.'

Carly gasped and Sonny and Taggert looked down at their feet. Jason's mask of indifference quickly faded and one of pure sympathy replaced it.

Katie blinked back the tears and continued, 'My mother screamed, they left pretty quickly, never seeing me. I ran to my mother after they left and screamed and cried for help. I tried to stop the blood, but I couldn't I tried—' Katie stopped talking again to control herself, her tears always on the verge of falling but never quite making it past her stubborn blinking.

'Katie,' Carly said quietly, 'You don't have to answer this if you don't want to, but why would Helena Cassadine kill your mother?'

\*\*\*Luke's\*\*\*

'Hi sweetheart, what brings you here so early in the morning? Change your mind?' Luke drawled.

'Shut up Luke, I just came from the hospital that your son is at.'

Luke's heart dropped into the bottom of his stomach, 'What do you mean, hospital?'

'He's fine Luke. Elizabeth Webber, Emily Quartermaine and Nikolas were attacked last night by Liz's rapist and apparently Emily's blackmailer. They are all fine, relatively. Liz went into shock and her parents took her home, to Colorado.'

Luke put his head down, understanding what this was all about. 'How's Cowboy taking it?' he asked quietly.

'Cowboy is fine Luke,' Laura said, anger creeping into her voice. 'Lucky could use his parents though.'

Luke nodded and finally said, 'What do you want me to do?'

'Lucky thinks you and I need to work things out. He doesn't want to burden me with his troubles as long as I have you to worry about,' Luke grimaced as though he were in pain. 'So, I think it would be wise if we talked.'

'Talk away darling.'

'Luke, I've been up all night worrying about my son. If you want to talk come by the house tonight. After supper.'

Luke looked up with hope in his eyes. He would make this right if it killed him. He smiled slowly, 'I'll be there with bells on.'

Laura looked at Luke's smile dubiously and could only wonder what that man had up his sleeve.

\*\*\*Cottage\*\*\*

'Oh my god, AJ,' Robin whispered. 'I'm fine AJ!' she called, opening the door.

He was standing there ready to knock again, he looked concerned. 'Are you sure?'

'Absolutely,' Robin gave him a weak smile.

'You don't want to talk about it?'

The wheels in Robin's mind started to turn, AJ could help her, even if he didn't really know how.

'Actually, I would like to later,' Robin smiled. 'But maybe we could meet for lunch at the Outback, I have a class soon.'

AJ nodded, puzzled at Robin's obvious change in emotions. Last night she had been a sobbing wreck, now she was a coquettish, happy girl. He managed to stutter, ''Sure, meet you at noon.''

''Great, '' Robin grinned like a Cheshire cat. This was going to work out for her after all.

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

''Kate, '' Taggert said quietly. ''Why did she kill your mother?''

''Uhh, because my mother had an affair with one of her sons. Well, more than an affair. They were married, or eloped, without Helena's consent, '' Katie paused, ready to drop the bomb. ''That marriage resulted in me.''

''Are you saying what I think you're saying, '' Carly whispered, ''Are you a Cassadine?''

Coming up:

After effects of Katie's little announcement

Chapter Eight

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Carly said again, ''Are you a Cassadine Katie?''

Katie nodded and looked closely at Carly's face. Katie knew everything about the Cassadine Spencer feud. She didn't know however, how much of a Spencer Caroline was. She had been worried about Caroline's reaction for sometime now. Katie didn't think Caroline would care that much, but with Caroline you never really knew how she would react to anything.

To Katie's relief, Caroline gave a small smile and reached for Katie's hand. She said quietly, '' You finally found your family Katie, I guess we both got what we wanted.''

Katie and Caroline smiled, remembering the moment when Katie was seven and Caroline was eleven. They had told each other that what they wanted more than anything in world was to find their families. Caroline was right, they had fulfilled their wishes. Katie cringed as she remembered being a member of the Cassadine family could get her and her loved ones killed.

''Wait a minute, '' Sonny interrupted the quiet moment Katie and Carly were sharing. ''What does all of this have to do with the organization?''

Katie's mind snapped back to reality and faced Sonny, ''Oh, yea well actually one of the reasons I wanted to tell all of you was because just knowing me and working with me poses as a threat to you. Helena is a dangerous woman and she would kill all of you without a second thought.''

Jason and Taggert nodded, but it was Sonny who said what they all were thinking. ''Honey, my life is in so much danger, putting Helena

Cassadine into the mix is not going to break my back.'

Taggart looked at Katie, who didn't seem any more relieved. He knew there was probably something else. Katie returned his questioning glare with a sheepish smile.

'And,' Katie said, again interrupting Sonny's exit from the room. Sonny groaned. Katie said timidly, 'She's been in contact with Moreno.'

'WHAT?!' Taggart exploded. 'Kate Thomas, you know what this means. No personal ties to a case. You're off, pack your bags.'

'Taggart,' Katie says with unexpected force, 'You need me for this case. And I need this case. You can't send me away.'

'Kate, this goes against procedure,' Taggart began and then said loudly, 'This is why you were put on temporary suspension before. Don't stick your nose places where it can be easily chopped off. The WSB is not your personal problem solver. World Security Bureau NOT We Solve your Business!'

'Marcus!' Katie hissed, tossing her hair with nostrils flaring. 'You know that I would never endanger you or anyone that I care about. I'm not an idiot. Let me do this.'

'No,' Taggart said with simple resolution. 'Case closed.' Katie's shoulders slumped.

Sonny looked at Katie's defeated face and then at Carly and Jason, he spoke up and said, 'I don't know Jason. I was not looking forward to working with Taggart to begin with,' he sighed. 'Now that little Miss Cassadine isn't there to sweeten the deal, I don't know.'

Jason picked up on Sonny's logic and piped in, 'Count me out Taggart. If Thomas is out, I'm out.'

Carly smiled at Katie, 'Yea me too.'

Taggart gave Carly an incredulous look, 'And what were you going to do? Shoot potential kidnappers?'

Katie saw Carly's eyes fill with tears and said, 'Enough!' As she said it Sonny and Jason saw Carly's tears and anger and tensed, as if ready to attack Taggart. 'That was going too far Marcus.'

Taggart bit his lip and rolled his eyes. He looked at Katie. She was so young, inexperienced and determined. He had kept in close contact with this kid for three years. He was her designated partner from the beginning. It was his job to make sure she didn't get herself killed. And she was an endearing kid too, like a little sister or something. He sighed and rubbed his baldhead, 'Fine don't screw this up Kate.'

'Now that that is settled' Carly said, giving a snide look to Taggart, 'I'll tell you what I was planning to do. I made some, uhh, let's say acquaintances in Shadybrooke. Old ladies who were pretending to be nuts to avoid a bad rap. Ex-wives of very important

people. It was amazing how much they knew about stuff going on in the underworld. I think when visiting hours roll around this week, I'll go a callin'. See what kind of stuff people are saying.'

'Impressive,' Sonny smiled at Carly. 'I'll work at getting some good body guards again. We'll definitely be needing them for Michael's sake. And then Jason and I can get into contact with some reliable people'

Jason nodded and said, 'It's best if we gather all the information we can on Helena Cassadine.'

'Why don't you talk to Laura?' Katie suggested to Carly.

'What? No way.' Carly said adamantly.

'Come on Caroline,' Katie pleaded. 'You're her relative. She's your Aunt for god's sake. At least work for an introduction. She could tell me so much.'

Carly huffed and finally said, 'Fine. But this means I have to see my dear Uncle Luke about it, and' she looked at Katie, 'you owe me. What's Taggart got to do?'

'I work in the PCPD. That's what I do. And you better not let on about me to anyone. Especially Luke and anyone involved in the organization. I'll drop by tomorrow morning and we can plan our next course of action.' Taggart said, taking one last look at his group, a very weird and unusual group to be associated to the WSB. He made a mental note to pray for all of them and walked out of the penthouse.

\*\*\*Dock's\*\*\*

Lucky had been waiting on the launch for two hours. Nikolas would have to come over to the mainland eventually. His mind had to think about something other than Elizabeth, so he concentrated on the mystery girl. It was really kind of weird how everything happened last night. The girl seemed to know Nikolas, but Nikolas didn't have a clue about who she was. Lucky had never seen her in Port Charles before. She didn't attend the high school.

Lucky's thoughts were interrupted by Nikolas' boat arriving at the launch.

'Hey,' Lucky said, thoughts of a Cassadine/Spencer feud completely out of his mind.

'Good morning,' Nikolas said sadness and happiness mixing in his voice. He knew Liz left and he was worried about his brother. But he was happy that he was actually worried about his brother. It didn't make any sense to him; he was definitely spending a lot of time around American teenagers.

'Before you ask me how I am, I'm fine considering the circumstances,' he smiled slightly at his half-brother. 'I don't want to talk about it. Not now. I want to find this girl.'

'All right,' Nikolas said, amazed at Lucky's intuition. 'I heard

one of the detectives, uhh, Detective Taggart I think call her Thomas, and something about a penthouse.'

'Okay. So I guess that's a last name,' Lucky was deep in thought. 'Let's go to Jason Morgan's penthouse. I'm sure he can help us somehow.'

Nikolas nodded and said, 'He's staying at Robin's cottage though.'

'No, I checked this morning. I walked by the cottage and he wasn't there,' Lucky said. 'Call it instinct, but I think he's back at the penthouse.'

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Jason wasn't at the penthouse though. He and Katie realized that room was becoming limited in the penthouse, so they went to the manager and were getting the other penthouse opened for them.

Latecia arrived at the penthouse while Carly was trying to feed Michael stuffed bananas. Sonny had driven out to get her and someone to watch the penthouse door. He had gotten a hold of Reynaldo, who would be arriving shortly.

So once the penthouse seemed to be in relative order, Carly decided to take a shower. Her first real shower in the longest time. When she finished, the bathroom was completely steamed up. She tried her best to look for towels, but it seemed as if Katie and Jason had used every last one of them. She cursed silently. She looked longingly at the laundry chute that had sent her nightgown down to the basement.

Carly slowly peaked her head out of the bathroom; her bedroom was just around the corner, she just had to run for it. Sonny was probably gone and Latecia was downstairs with Michael.

'Here goes,' Carly breathed and started to race down the hall.

She rounded the corner and truly believed it until she ran smack dab into Sonny. She fell backwards with a loud thud and looked up indignantly, forgetting that she was naked. Sonny obviously didn't notice at first, when he started to say, 'Hey, slow down there!' he obviously noticed then, at about the same time Carly remembered. She gasped and Sonny spun around.

'Dammit,' Carly muttered, and then loudly said, 'DON'T TURN AROUND!'

'Do you always run around your house naked?' Sonny asked and was answered by the slamming of the bathroom door.

'Will you just shut your mouth and get me something!' Carly hissed.

'Fine, I'll be right back, don't try to sprint to your room nude, I'd hate to knock you down again,' Sonny laughed.

He was answered this time by Carly's cursing and banging the bathroom



door with her fist. He decided it would be best to do what she wants.

### \*\*\*Penthouse 2\*\*\*

Katie and Jason are moving things into the penthouse across the hall. They decided that Katie would move in there, and they would all meet there when Taggert came.

'You know Morgan,' Katie said, as they put down the large circular table in the middle of the meeting room. 'There are four bedrooms in this penthouse. I was thinking one of them; well it would be a good idea to keep a kind of first aid station. This whole thing could get ugly.'

'Yea, Thomas,' Jason said, as if that were Katie's first name. 'I'll see what we can do about getting a doctor or EMT downstairs or something again. I used to have one.'

An air of silence filled the room after Jason's last sentence. His face was filled with guilt and he purposely slammed a chair on the ground, causing Katie to jump. They started back to the other penthouse.

'You know Morgan, this isn't your fault,' Katie said reassuringly.

'Then whose fault is it?' He said with anger. 'I wasn't thinking clearly.'

They went into the hall between the two penthouses. Katie sighed, 'You just wanted safety for the people you loved.'

'Thought I loved,' muttered Jason in a tone that meant it was the end of this discussion. 'So when did you, you know find out about this Cassadine thing?'

'Two and a half years ago. It was weird,' Katie said, both she and Jason not noticing the elevator doors opening. 'I remembered my mother talking about his legacy with my father. Who knew I was the daughter of the Cassadine, you know. And that just by being that daughter, I could die. When I found out it was like I was another person. I had woken up to a new life. You know?'

'Yea, I do,' Jason smiled. 'When are you going to tell the other Cassadine's. I guess he's your half brother, Nikolas.'

'I don't know. But that's a story,' Katie said as Jason opened the door to the penthouse, 'Last nightâ€|'

Katie and Jason left an opened mouth, unseen Nikolas and Lucky in the elevator. Lucky pressed the button to close the door and then slammed onto the hold button.

'I guess that answers our questions doesn't it?' Lucky said, awestruck.

### \*\*\*Penthouse 1 Bathroom\*\*\*

Carly had not stopped cursing herself since Sonny had left to get her

something to wear. A timid knock on the door was followed by a small snicker.

'Room service,' Sonny said, breaking out into uncontrollable laughter.

'I DON'T think this is funny!' Carly said opening the door a crack and grabbing the shirt Sonny had given her. She wriggled the man's dress shirt on her body, and opened the door with as much vigor as she had slammed it with.

'Aww, come on,' Sonny said, his laughter finally stopping. 'You shouldn't run around in your birthday suit if you don't want to get caught.'

'I didn't know you were still here!' Carly exclaimed, finally looking at Sonny. The sight took her breath away. He was in blue boxers and shirtless. Her eyes finally stopped staring at his perfection and met his grinning face. 'You're are such a jerk.'

'You're welcome for the shirt, Carly,' Sonny drawled as she huffed past him, he looked appreciatively at her long legs coming from the men's dress shirt that was just long enough.

'No, Sonny you're welcome,' Carly said as the bathroom door shut, she had forgotten to tell him about the lack of towels in the bathroom. She went and got dressed returned to the hallway to see Sonny sneaking down the hallway, wrapped in the shower curtain. She laughed.

'Very funny naked chick!' Sonny said and laughed. 'Do me a favor, go buy towels today! Lot's of them!'

## Chapter Nine

### \*\*\*Penthouse Elevator\*\*\*

Lucky looked at his brother tentatively. As far as he knew, this could happen in two ways. Nikolas could be happy, like he was when he found out about Lulu. Or he could be an arrogant Cassadine and refuse to acknowledge the girl's existence. To Lucky's surprise, Nikolas reacted in a completely unknown way.

'We have to find out if this is true or not,' Nikolas stated. He knew his father must have had many concubines, countless other women. It was his job as heir to make sure there was no threat to the dynasty. Nikolas sighed in spite of himself, he wanted family. Interacting with Lulu and to a lesser extent Lucky had taught him just how important siblings are. This girl seemed interesting, articulate and brave. She had saved his friends. He could definitely find himself being friends with this girl.

'So we should definitely go back up,' Lucky suggested.

'Yes, but how are we going to explain our presence?'

'Oh don't worry,' Lucky laughed, 'just try to follow along.'

\*\*\*Cottage\*\*\*

Robin is quietly humming to herself as she fixes her hair and reapplies her lip-gloss. She walks over to the pictures on the desk. There were so many of Michael. A couple of Robin, Michael and Jason together. And one of Carly, Jason and Michael. It had been taken shortly after the kidnapping. Robin picked it up and looked at it, tears coming to her eyes.

'I know what she's doing Jason. And there's no way in hell she's going to get away with it. AJ will help me, he'll get Carly away from you, and then you'll remember how much you love me,' Robin thinks, tracing her finger along Jason's photographed face. She studies Carly, the conniving smile and the shifty eyes.

'There's no way in hell I'll let you have my family, Carly Roberts,' Robin says aloud, throwing the photograph against the wall.

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Carly and Katie are playing with Michael on the floor. Jason seems to be filing through a bunch of papers on the couch, but he can't tear his eyes away from the giggling beauties and the laughing little boy on the floor. Sonny comes down the steps and smiles and winks at Carly, who was talking animatedly to Michael. Carly sees his arrogant wink and can't help but give him an exasperated smirk.

'Carly, if you have time today,' Sonny bends down to her place on the floor and hands her a list. 'I would really appreciate it if you did a little shopping for me today. Jason said it was one of the things you do best. Oh and get me a couple of dress shirts too, I seem to have lost one of mine.'

Carly grins and retaliates with, 'Yea, okay. I need to go get a new shower curtain anyway.'

Jason didn't recognize or even understand that Sonny and Carly were talking in innuendoes, he looked up from his papers and innocently said, 'Carly, we'll need more stuff for both penthouses, towels and food and everything.'

Katie and Jason didn't understand why Carly and Sonny went into hysterics, but the infectious laughter caught on and even baby Michael giggled.

'Oh gosh,' Carly breathed, wiping tears from under her eyes. She picked up her playful son and said, 'Come on Mister man, let's get you ready for shopping and visiting Uncle Luke.'

A knock on the door interrupted Michael's incoherent babbling. Sonny walked over muttering, 'What in the world is taking Reynaldo so long to get here? It's probably just the bald James Bond anyway.'

He opened the door and was surprised at the sight of the even more surprised Lucky Spencer.

'Sonny, when did you get back?' Lucky said, his plan already starting to unravel.

'He Lucky. I got back last night. What can I do for you, and your uhh friend?' Sonny asked, perplexed by Lucky's visit, and the dark haired kid that was standing next to him.

'Oh actually we're here to see her,' Nikolas pointed at Katie, Lucky looked at Nikolas in disbelief. Nikolas just smiled and said, 'I'm sorry, we didn't catch your name last night.'

All eyes were on Katie, who was shocked at Nikolas' sudden appearance on her doorstep. She didn't seem to miss a beat though. She overcame a wave of panic and said cheerfully, 'It's Kate Thomas. You guys don't have another knife wielding psycho chasing you do you?'

Carly and Sonny looked perplexed and Lucky sheepishly explained, 'Last night we were attacked and uhh, Kate here kind of rescued us.'

'If you don't mind my asking, how did you find me here?' Katie asked looking directly at Nikolas.

'Ohh, uh Detective Taggart told us where you were,' Lucky jumped in with the lie.

Sonny and Carly looked at each other with stern glances. The same thought running through their heads, they should never have trusted Taggart. Jason could feel that Lucky and this Cassadine kid weren't being entirely truthful.

Sonny spoke up after a moment of uncomfortable silence, 'Uhh, it's nice seeing you Spencer, give my regards to the family. But Jason and I will have a meeting to go to so, see you later. Oh and Carly, have dinner ready when we get home.'

Carly sneered at Sonny's back and then quickly came back to the situation at present. She could tell Katie was in turmoil. Katie was never so obnoxiously cheerful or corny. She tried to bail her out.

'Uhh actually Katie and I have to be going too. We just have to get Michael ready and then we have a million things to doâ€|'

Lucky interrupted, seizing the chance for Kate to be alone with Nikolas. 'Oh, is this my cousin Michael? Can I help, I haven't gotten acquainted with Michael yet.'

Carly glares at her cousin, a cousin who really hasn't spoken two sentences to her since she came to Port Charles. 'Sure,' she says tight-lipped. Carly looks at Katie, whose face has paled considerably. 'Katie, I'll be right down okay.'

Katie puts on her brightest smile and nods. Carly takes Michael upstairs, with Lucky following closely behind. Leaving brother and sister to get acquainted.

\*\*\*Luke's Office\*\*\*

Luke, who has been awake and working ever since Laura's visit is once again interrupted by someone banging on the door.

'Luke!' Alexis cries, 'I know you're in there! Open up dammit!'

Luke jumped out of his skin at the sound of Alexis's piercing cries. He opened the door to see a sobbing Alexis. She looked at him hatefully and hissed, 'This is all your fault.'

Luke recognized that Alexis was drunk, ridiculously so. He gathered the weeping Alexis into his arms and sat her on the couch letting her cry herself to sleep in his arms.

\*\*\*Michael's Nursery\*\*\*

Once inside the nursery, Carly puts Michael down in his crib and spins around angrily pointing her finger at Lucky. She hissed, 'What in the hell do you want from Katie?'

'We wanted to thank her,' Lucky said innocently.

'No, there's something else,' Carly said nostrils flaring. 'I may not be that much of an accepted Spencer, but I can recognize a scam when I see one. You're just like your father kid.'

'Don't say that,' Lucky said quietly, his eyes reflecting that same Spencer anger that Carly's eyes contained.

'Well don't act like him!' Carly's voice softened. 'I don't care what your plan is, leave Katie out of it, or you'll have to deal with me'

Lucky looked at his cousin with newfound admiration. She was being fiercely protective, and definitely showing off her temper, and making ridiculous threats. Lucky smiled, 'Gee Carly, you really are a Spencer.'

Carly rolled her eyes and grabbed Lucky's arm. 'Come on you brat. Meet Michael.'

\*\*\*Penthouse Living Room\*\*\*

Nikolas shifted uncomfortably under the gaze of Katie's light brown eyes. She finally spoke, 'I really don't understand the purpose of this visit.'

Nikolas gathered strength and blurted out, 'I really don't understand how you knew my name last night.'

Katie blushed and said, 'You know, you are in magazines, newspapers. You're practically a celebrity in Port Charles. Of course I knew who you were.'

Nikolas wasn't going to be brushed aside that easily, 'Why haven't I seen you in Port Charles before, why are you here?'

'I didn't know that saving my life gave you the right to ask twenty questions,' Katie said coldly. 'I just came to Port Charles yesterday. And I'm here to visit my best friend Caroline. Any more questions that you aren't entitled to ask Mr. Cassadine?'

Nikolas looked down, embarrassment and shame filling his eyes. 'I'm

sorry, it's just I was a little thrown off by your presence last night. It's like I should know you already.'

Katie's words caught in her throat and she looked at Nikolas, he looked so much like the pictures of Stavros Cassadine, their father. She couldn't think of anything to say and she could feel her body getting ready to cry.

Carly and Lucky bounded down the steps with Michael, who looked adorable in his blue winter coat.

'Hey guys,' Carly said brightly stepping beside Katie like a fierce bulldog. 'Hope we're not interrupting anything.'

'Nothing,' Nikolas said quietly. He looked at Lucky, a look that screamed think of something.

Lucky said cheerfully, 'Uhh, we're having a kind of welcome back party, start of the Christmas season at Luke's on the Friday after Thanksgiving. You guys are more than welcome to come.'

'I don't know,' Carly said, venom dripping from every word.

'Oh come on cuz, great food, great music, great company,' Lucky cajoled.

'We'll be there,' Katie piped in, looking at Lucky with a bright, painted on smile.

'Great,' Lucky said, a mischievous smile playing on his lips, 'You know, you and my brother Nikolas here, you guys look alike.'

Both Katie and Nikolas went pale. It was pretty obvious, but no one had mentioned it. They both had the same black hair; the same almond shaped eyes, with the strong brows. Carly covered for her panic stricken friend and said, 'Ok guys, we really have to be going, we'll see you Friday.'

She pushed Nikolas and Lucky out of the door, looking sympathetically at the tears already running down Katie's face.

\*\*\*Dock's\*\*\*

Sonny and Jason are walking along the docks and they stop at the designated meeting place. Both were a little nervous about this meeting. They're first meeting with their estranged business associates. Sonny knew that Jason wasn't too nervous, but Sonny was and he decided to engage in nervous chatter.

'So, Jason what happened to Robin,' Sonny blurted out, the look of pain that crossed Jason's eyes answered his question. 'Oh man, what happened?'

'I just saw a new side of her, one I didn't like,' Jason said.

Sonny couldn't accept that the sweet girl he knew had a bad side to her, he laughed, 'What did she turn into a nagging housewife.'

Jason looked at Sonny with a confused face and tried to explain, 'She tried to tell me things, things that she thought I didn't know, but I did. And she tried to come between me and my love for Michael.'

'Oh,' Sonny said, knowing that Jason knew what he was doing. But Sonny couldn't ignore the pain Jason was obviously in. He just hoped that Jason would give Robin a chance to explain herself. Love made people do strange things.

\*\*\*Katie's Car\*\*\*

'So, are you really ok?' Carly asked Katie, searching the younger woman's face for anguish.

'For the one hundredth time Caroline, I'll be fine.' Katie smiled at her concerned best friend. She was grateful for Caroline; she would have probably turned into a crying mess in front of Nikolas and Lucky without her.

'I'm going to so give it to Luke for raising such a little brat,' Carly fumed.

Katie smiled at her friend and then a thought ran back through her head, the thought that had been running through her head all morning, 'Caroline, do you think they know? They were both acting so weird.'

Caroline bit her lip and said quietly, 'I think they suspect something. But Katie, maybe it's a good thing.'

Katie gave Carly an incredulous look, which Carly smiled at. 'You know, I never want you to repeat my mistakes. Don't keep this secret from Nikolas too long, especially if you want a brother.'

Katie looked at Caroline as they stopped outside of Luke's. 'Give me a couple of days, Caroline.'

'Okay, but if you don't tell him by Friday, I don't know how I'll keep that arrogant cousin out of your business.'

\*\*\*Luke's\*\*\*

Alexis woke up to the sound of Luke whistling. She moaned and sat up, groggily wiping her puffy eyes.

'Gawd, woman,' Luke sneered. 'You look like hell. Do you mind telling me what the in the hell you're drunken pretty face was doing at my door this morning?'

'Luke, Stefan and Helena are very close to discovering the truth. They are positive its you and its only a matter of time before they find that I had something to do with it,' Alexis said, her voice cracking.

'Don't worry Lexie, everything's cool. We cleaned up after ourselves. Kitty Bell isn't dead,' Luke smiled, leaning back in his chair. 'We're free and clear babe.'

Katie and Caroline have walked up to the door, clearly not having any

problems with eavesdropping.

'How can you say that Luke?' Alexis hissed. 'Do you know what's at stake? Your family, your life. MY life.'

'Honey, don't worry. No one could possibly prove that you and I are responsible for the fall of Katherine Bell. She landed on her feet, I don't see what the problem is.'

'The problem is Luke, that I have just gained Stefan's trust backâ€|' Alexis is interrupted by a crying baby. She looks at Luke in panic. Luke can't hide his surprise and sudden panic as he rises to the open the door.

Outside, Carly looks sheepishly at Katie and picks up Michael's baby carrier and starts to back away from the door. Katie nods her head no, and whispers, 'This is going to work for our advantage' Katie throws the door open and looks at Luke with a malicious smile on her face.

'Who in the hell are you?' Luke bellows.

'Come on Luke, don't swear in front of my kid,' Caroline says, facing Luke's look of complete shock with a devilish sneer.

\*\*\*Helena's yacht\*\*\*

Helena is looking over papers when a servant brings her the phone.

'Phone call for you madam, Mr. Moreno,' the servant hands Helena the phone and quickly walks away.

'Hello, Mr. Moreno, Our plans are going well, I presume?' Helena smiles. The smile is frozen on her face however upon hearing Moreno's words. 'I'm sorry to hear that. No, no this can be easily fixed. I'm sure Mr. Corinthos and Mr. Morgan have something they can't bear to lose. Please give me a few days and I'll call you with a plan.'

Helena places the phone back on the receiver. She looks down at the paper she has just written an address and two names on. She circles the names, 'Morgan and Corinthos,' she says smiling wickedly. 'Oh yes I'm sure I can persuade you to disengage your plans.'

## Chapter 10

\*\*\*Luke's\*\*\*

'Well hello Caroline,' Luke drawled, desperately trying detect if that obnoxious niece of his had heard his conversation.

'Yes, Uncle Luke,' Carly sneers, 'We heard everything, so stop trying to cover your scrawny butt.'

'Mr. Spencer,' Katie begins coldly. 'I'm an agent from the WSB, and Iâ€|'

'Hold on one minute sweetheart,' Luke said, clearly agitated by



Katie's prescence, he turns to Caroline, ''What are you doing hanging around with the WSB? And what in the hell are you doing listening to my conversations?''

Katie begins to open her mouth again, and is cut off by Carly's angry remarks, ''Well Luke, this WSB agent happens to be my friend, and I don't think you're in the position to be asking questions.''

''Look sweet Caroline, I don't have the time to listen to your whining, go findâ€|''

''EXCUSE ME!'' Alexis shouts. She had been staring at Katie for some time now, with a look of recognition. ''I believe this WSB agent has something to say, and I think that we,'' she looked directly at Luke, ''should listen.''

''Thank you Ms. Davis,'' Katie said giving Luke a cold look. The two Spencers could have been there for hours arguing about absolutely nothing. ''We did here the, uhh predicament that the two of you are in, and I am willing to offer you a deal.''

''Honey, I know I haven't been around the WSB for a while now,'' Luke sneered, ''but offering deals doesn't sound too kosher to me.''

''What can I say?'' Katie said, looking at Luke with pure hatred and disgust, ''You're old, and things have changed.''

Luke looks at this girl with new found appreciation, her young face and voice betrayed her strength. He remembered exactly what his situation was, he smiled and said, ''Touche Miss WSB, do you have a name.''

''Kate Thomas,'' she said, not really relenting on her cold stance with Luke, she continued while glaring at him, ''The situation the both of you are in can be fixed before it explodes. I'm willing to make sure all evidence against the both of you is erased, the police will not prosecute.''

Alexis looks hopeful at Kate's words and blurts out, ''In return for what.''

''Ms. Davis,'' Katie gives Alexis a kind look, ''We all share a common enemy. We need information and help with containing a problem.''

''And what would that problem be?'' Luke said, his face conveying the fact that he meant business.

''Helena Cassadine.''

\*\*\*Outback\*\*\*

AJ and Robin are at a table, eating lunch. AJ gives a concerned look at Robin, who has reached for her pills in her purse.

''So Robin,'' AJ begins after Robin takes six pills of assorted sizes. ''Not that I don't enjoy your company, but what was wrong with you last night?''

'It's Jason,' she said, the tears already coming to her eyes, venom lacing her next words, 'and Carly.'

'Is Carly back?' AJ asked in surprise.

'Yes and she has completely ruined my life within a span of twenty-four hours,' upon seeing AJ's look of sympathy she realizes that her plan is working and continues, 'Jason and Carly are living in the penthouse now. Last night Carly manipulated me into saying some pretty awful things and Jason overheard.'

'I'm so sorry Robin.'

'Well, I'm not giving up,' Robin said wiping the tears from under her eyes, 'I just need Jason to understand what a horrible person Carly is.'

'But no matter what Robin,' AJ said gently, 'Jason and Carly share Michael. That won't go away ever.'

'I know, it's so strange though,' Robin said, the faint glimmer appearing in her eyes, 'It's like Michael doesn't even belong with Jason sometimes.'

She continued toying with her food for a few moments, when she looked up, she saw that AJ's eyes had clouded over with doubt. Everything was going to go her way.

\*\*\*Quartermaine Mansion\*\*\*

Emily, Nikolas and Lucky are walking through the door wearing grim expressions. Emily sighed as she placed her coat in the closet.

'I'm so relieved this whole thing is finally over,' she said, her eyes puffy from what had seemed like twenty-four hours of crying. She had already dealt with her parents, her grandfather, Liz's leaving town, and a statement down at the PCPD.

'I know,' Nikolas said grabbing her hand, 'but the thing to keep on saying is that this whole thing is finally over.'

Shivers went down Emily's spine. No matter how many times she told herself that she and Nikolas were just friends, she could never make those shivers believe it, or the thumping of her heart and the butterflies in her stomach. She looked at Lucky, who seemed to be dealing with Liz's departure in a healthy way. Lucky smiled.

'But now we have a new mystery to solve,' Lucky's words were met with a look of surprise from Emily. 'The girl from last night, we found out who she was.'

'Who is she?'

'My sister,' Nikolas said quietly.

\*\*\*Luke's\*\*\*

Carly was entertaining Michael on Luke's couch, while Katie, Alexis and Luke were talking at Luke's desk.

'So are we in agreement?' Katie said, finally taking a seat next to Carly.

'Yes,' Alexis said, and then ventured to ask another question, one that had been nagging her since she saw Kate's face. 'If you don't mind my asking Kate, how did you know my name and my situation with Helena.'

'Don't pry Lexie,' Luke said, his sense of humor finally returning, 'If my old brain can remember, the WSB knows lots of things.'

'Yes, but how did you know I was Natasha?' Alexis persisted in asking questions. Katie had unnerved her when laying everyone's cards on the table, stating that Alexis could be protected from her overbearing stepmother.

'When I feel that you need to know that information, I'll tell you,' Katie said with quiet determination.

'What I want to know is what that son of mine was thinking,' Luke said with a mixture of pride and annoyance, 'planning a party here without even inviting me.'

'Luke, you really need to teach that boy some manners,' Carly finally spoke up.

'Well little Miss Mary Sunshine, it would be a case of the blind leading the blind,' Luke smiled at baby Michael, 'Don't worry Mikey, momma won't ever try to teach you manners either.'

'Either way,' Katie said, 'It is the perfect way to put our plan into motion. We'll see you on Friday.'

'Let's go Michael, say bye to Uncle Luke,' Carly said turning to Luke and sticking her tongue out at him, and followed Katie out the door. Leaving a smiling Luke and a bewildered Alexis behind.

\*\*\*Q Mansion\*\*\*

'I can't believe you said that Lucky,' Emily said, shocked at Nikolas Lucky's retelling of that morning's events.

'What?' Lucky smiled, 'It was just a casual observation.'

'It completely threw me off guard,' Nikolas said seriously, the corners of his mouth turning up into a smile. 'But it was very effective, Kate definitely reacted.'

'I just don't want you guys to alienate her,' Emily said looking at the two determined, headstrong boys in front of her. 'She did save our lives, and she could be your sister.'

'Yea, well we're going to find out.' Nikolas said, his eyes reflecting the determination in his voice.

\*\*\*Docks\*\*\*

Katie and Carly are strolling along with Michael. They have a

considerable amount of bags, mostly clothing and food.

Carly smiles as she peeks into the bag. ''I'm so excited. A real thanksgiving, with you, Jason and my precious little man.''

''Sonny?'' Katie jokes.

Carly rolls her eyes, ''Him too. He's a really nice guy, if not a little arrogant and pompous and well full of himself and extremely good looking.''

''Yea,'' Katie smiled and then remembered something that had been nagging her all day. ''Caroline, it doesn't really matter to you that I'm a Cassadine, does it?''

Carly smiles at Katie, ''You and I were Caroline and Katie long before we became Carly Spencer and Kate Cassadine. You are my family Katie-bear.''

''I love you Caroline,'' Katie hugged her best friend, and then said indignantly, ''Did you just call me Katie-bear?''

Carly laughed, and then her face took on a more serious look, ''You know Katie, I think it's my God given right to tell you how not to screw up. I just want you to know that I purposely kept myself from my family for a long time. It's not a good idea.''

''Give me a little while, I'll tell him,'' Katie smiled at Carly, ''I promise.''

''Good, enough of my little moment of wisdom,'' Carly said smiling.

Her smile faded however when she saw none other than Robin Scorpio in front of them.

''Wisdom, Carly?'' Robin sneered. ''Are you teaching her how to trap unsuspecting men into baby traps?''

\*\*\*Docks\*\*\*

Sonny and Jason are walking. They had accomplished their goal for the day. Contacts had been reestablished, and they even had a small army of men backing them. Sonny was carrying bags of food and Jason was carrying a large, frozen turkey. They both looked like grocery delivery boys, in their Armani suits. But any man that looked on them could sense that these men should never be laughed at. They had purposeful, confident strides, and steel in their eyes.

''So why is Turkey only eaten once a year?'' Jason asked suddenly, causing Sonny to laugh.

''Well it's not just once a year. You can have it whenever you want, but it is tradition to have it on Thanksgiving. Something about Pilgrims and Indians.''

Jason nodded, pretending to understand. This is definitely something Carly could explain better. He really wanted to know so he could tell Michael all about it, this being Michael's first Thanksgiving and

all.

As if on cue, Carly appeared on the dock's, but her tense angry face told both Jason and Sonny that she was in no mood to talk turkey. In front of Robin, with her back turned to Jason and Sonny was Robin Scorpio.

\*\*\*Docks\*\*\*

'What no welcome home Carly?' Carly sneered, trying to get past Robin. Michael began to cry, as if sensing Robin. Carly bent down to tend to him, not seeing Jason and Sonny behind Robin.

Katie didn't see them either, she was looking directly into Robin's eyes, with a look of pure hate.

'The only time I'll welcome the sight of you Carly,' Robin said with malice, 'Is the day you're behind bars, or maybe in your coffin.'

'What in the hell do you want Robin?' Carly hissed, trying to soothe Michael.

'What's the matter Michael, don't like it with your real Mommy, don't worry, you'll be with Daddy soon,' Robin said cryptically.

'What do you mean by that?' Katie said finally with a calm, even voice.

'Excuse me, I didn't invite you into my conversation,' Robin said with a sickeningly sweet smile, 'But since you obviously have the burden of knowing Carly, I'll tell you. I just had lunch with AJ Quartermaine.'

Carly's whole body tensed, as did Jason's. Katie just looked directly into Robin's eyes and said 'Excuse ME, but I don't think I invited you into the conversation Caroline were having, but you still butted you're pathetic little head right in didn't you?'

'Oh, Caroline?' Robin said in evil delight. 'So you know our precious Caroline, do you know what she's become as Carly Roberts? A scheming slut, a sociopath, a gun toting, doctor shooting idiot and an incarcerated psychopath.'

'I think that's enough Miss Scorpio,' Katie hissed, her nostrils flaring. 'Yes, I know who you are, I know who your parents were too, and I'm sure they're turning in their graves at what you've become. A weak-willed, whining little brat.'

Robin's jaw dropped and she said defiantly, 'I don't know who you are, but you have no right to be talking about my parents like that.'

'Don't I? Is that just a right extended to you? Saying rude, malicious things about people I mean. I know you need to carry a pedestal around to see past a person's knees, but you really should carry around a more sturdy pedestal. One you won't fall off of so easily, because what I see before me is a pompous little windbag, who obviously surrounds herself with people she thinks she's better than

so she doesn't have to think about her pathetic little life that she's screwed up beyond repair.'

Katie has been advancing towards Robin the entire time, until she was about a foot away from her. Katie stood at a towering 5'8" in her flat shoes over Robin, whose lip was quivering as she brought her hand up to slap Katie.

Katie quickly grabbed Robin's extended hand and said in low, even tone, 'I don't think so Rainbow Bright, I'll knock those little hair clips and the REST of your hair straight into New Jersey,' Katie twisted Robin's arm. 'Don't speak to Caroline again, and don't ever let me hear you saying anything bad about her, UNDERSTAND?'

Jason walks up and pries Robin's hand out of Katie's grip. Robin looks at Jason with panic and fear, hoping he hadn't heard the entire conversation. Jason threw Robin a look of disgust, took Katie's arms and walked her back to Carly and Michael. Robin turned to see Sonny standing there, arms crossed. Her initial surprise vanished in the need to cover her hide and she batted her lashed over innocent eyes and said, 'Sonny, what are you doing here, I'm so glad you're home.'

Robin went to hug Sonny but he put up his hand to stop her. 'Robin, I don't even know who you are anymore.'

Sonny walked and joined his friends as they headed to Katie's car, leaving Robin to sulk in a pool of indignation and self-pity.

\*\*\*Q mansion\*\*\*

'So come to the club Friday night,' Lucky told Emily and kissed her cheek as Nikolas and he were preparing to leave.

'I'll be there with bells on,' Emily said and looked at Lucky's face, again seeing the little boy that was her best friend, 'And thank you Lucky, you have no idea how happy you've made me.'

'I love ya Em,' Lucky smiled and walked to Nikolas' car.

Emily and Nikolas looked at one another. Nikolas was smiling, but Emily could see a look of confusion and doubt in his eyes on account of his new-found sister. She grabbed his hand, her heart pounding at the feel of his warm skin against her cold hand.

'I can never repay you Nikolas,' she said quietly, looking directly into his eyes. 'And I'll do anything, whenever you need me, for whatever the reason, just ask.'

Emily's quiet oath gave Nikolas a warm sensation in his heart. All of his life, people had been keeping things from him, but this girl, Emily, who he cared about so deeply had just promised him her friendship, understanding and help for the rest of her life. And he knew she was speaking the truth. He suddenly knew that she would never lie to him, that she would always care for him, and always be there when he needed her. For a moment the veil was lifted from Nikolas' eyes and he saw a young woman standing before him. A beautiful, intelligent, young woman that sent chills down his spine. He found his hand caressing her cheek, the softness of her making his head swim. Before the veil dropped back in place, he kissed her.

Emily was surprised at Nikolas' sudden outburst of affection, but she quickly lost herself in the sweet, tender kiss. She wished it could last forever, knowing this was not a kiss from a boy who thought of her as a little sister. Her hands touched his face as his hands encircled her waist.

Suddenly, Nikolas broke away. The veil was back in place and he could see clearly. But the veil couldn't stop the pounding of his heart and the dizziness he felt. He still saw that desirable young woman standing before him, but it was mixed with his sweet, innocent Emily. His face flushed as she looked at him in confusion. He muttered 'I'm sorry.' And walked out of the mansion in a daze.

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Katie had taken Michael upstairs and Sonny was giving Reynaldo instructions at the door. Carly and Jason looked at each other, Carly's face showed her confusion and apprehension at Jason's lack of reaction over the scene with Robin. Jason's face was as usual unreadable.

Jason cleared his throat and said, 'I owe you an apology Carly. I should have believed you a long time ago about Robin. I just wasn't seeing things clearly. I know now that you're my friend, and you would never intentionally lie to me.'

The anger that Carly had felt towards Jason in the past 24 hours had dissipated long ago. Jason wasn't a hero anymore, he was a man and a damn good one. She hugged Jason and kissed him on the cheek. 'I love you Jase, and I only want you to be happy.'

Jason's stoic face melted and he smiled slightly. 'Thanks Carly.'

Carly skipped towards the stairs, 'I am going to bed, we have a big couple of days ahead of us, Turkey and Luke's party.'

Jason looked confused, 'Luke's party?' he stuttered as Katie bounded down the steps.

'Explain it to him, Katie-did,' Carly said quietly, giving her friend a hug, 'g'night.'

Carly ran up the steps, leaving Jason utterly lost and Katie smiling slightly.

'Luke is having a party on Friday, we're kind of setting a trap for Helena.'

'We?' Jason asked, still not clear on what was going on.

'Come on, let's go for a walk,' Katie said, linking her arm through Jason's. 'I'll explain everythingâ€|after I get a cone of chocolate mint chip.'

\*\*\*Spoon Island\*\*\*

Alexis is in the attic, riffling through boxes. Katie's face seems to

be haunting her, she knew she had seen it before. She was on the last box, it contained pictures from almost twenty years ago. A vacation the Stefan, Stavros and Alexis had taken together on the beaches of France. Alexis was only 12 years old, but she remembered things from that summer so vividly. It was the summer Stavros had turned into an unbearable monster. He had always been pompous, arrogant, a typical Cassadine male, but something in him had changed that summer, he became intentionally cruel and cold.

She opened the box and flipped through black and white photos. The three of them were smiling and happy. There were even pictures of Stefan and Stavros in amicable poses, arms linked, grinning. Then she saw the picture, it was Stefan and Alexis smiling on the beach, and in the background was Stavros. A happy Stavros, embracing a tall girl with long, dark hair.

'Oh god,' Alexis exclaimed, the pieces in her mind falling into place, 'Monique.'

\*\*\*Sonny's room\*\*\*

Sonny is tossing and turning in his bed. In his mind he is walking on a stormy beach. He can barely call it walking, every step he takes he is pushed back by the strong winds. He has this feeling of terror, he has to move forward. He has to get away. He doesn't want to run, he just wants to walk away from what's behind him. The wind is too strong though and he soon finds himself falling backwards on the beach.

The skies clear then, and a beautiful sunset takes the place of the storm. Sonny looks around, knowing that he can't go any further tonight. Then he sees her.

'Surprised to see me?' Brenda says, walking towards Sonny with the magnificent sunset behind her. She's beautiful, her hair is waving about freely in the wind, framing her amazing face.

'No.' Sonny whispered.

'Why were you trying to leave Sonny? You don't have to you know.' She smiled, that smile that drove him crazy.

'No, I do have to leave. I don't belong here,' Sonny whispered, a lump growing in his throat. 'I'm sorry Brenda.'

'Sorry?' she scoffed. 'Sorry Brenda. You left me Sonny, to die. Do you know how much pain you caused me. Is this what you wanted? For me to die?'

'NO,' Sonny yelled. 'I love you Brenda.'

'Then stay with me, always. You owe me that much.'

'I can't and you know it,' Sonny said, tears flowing down his face. He turned from Brenda. 'Is this my punishment?'

Brenda put her arms around Sonny's waist and placed her cheek on his shoulder. 'I didn't think you would consider me a punishment Sonny. Isn't nice here? Don't tell me you would rather go through the storm.'



'I have to Brenda,' he said, relishing at her touch, letting guilt take over his body.

'Then you never really did love me,' Brenda said, releasing his body, slowly backing away from him.

'Come with me.'

Brenda gave a cruel laugh, 'You know I can't. And it's all your fault.'

'NO!' Sonny screamed jumping out of his bed, 'It's not my fault.'

He babbled and cried and almost didn't notice the soft hands that were running through his hair, or the kind voice soothing his cries. He grabbed Carly's hands and pulled her to him, kissing her roughly.

Carly was surprised at the sudden intimate contact. Soon his kisses became gentle. She lost herself in him.

\*\*\*Bridge\*\*\*

Katie is busy eating her Chocolate mint chip cone and Jason is sipping on a milkshake. Jason looks at Katie and asks, 'Do you do this often Thomas?'

'What?'

'Eat ice cream outside in the freezing cold?'

'It's just one of my quirks. I drink hot chocolate in the summer. Sometimes I just miss seasons. The first time I remember eating ice cream was in the winter. My mom had bought me a cone of chocolate mint chip.'

Katie's eyes dropped to her shoes, Caroline always bought her a pint of ice cream at the beginning of the winter, well when they saw that winter had started in colder regions, being blessed with Florida weather and all. Katie had told her the story when she was six. And every year she got a pint of chocolate mint chip at the first report of a cold spell in the northeast. Even in the past two years, Katie got a gift certificate for Baskin Robbin's in early December.

She remembered that if things don't go as planned, this could be the last winter she eats ice cream in winter. Fear consumes her, fear of how Nikolas will react, fear of what Helena will do, not only to her, but to her loved ones as well. When she looked up she saw Jason looking desolately at his feet. Tears were slowly trickling down his cheeks.

'Jason? Are you okay?' she asked concerned.

Jason slowly shook his head no. Katie went to him, letting her instincts take over. She put her arms around his shoulder and let him cry on her shoulder.

Spend all your time waiting for that second chance

For the break that will make it OK  
There's always some reason to feel not good enough  
And it's hard at the end of the day  
I need some distraction or a beautiful release  
Memories seep from my veins  
Let me be empty and weightless and maybe  
I'll find some peace tonight

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

In the arms of the Angel far away from here  
From this dark, cold hotel room, and the endlessness that you feel  
  
You are pulled from the wreckage of your silent reverie  
You're in the arms of the Angel; may you find some comfort here

Sonny pulls Carly on to the bed. They both are oblivious to the pain,  
to themselves even.

So tired of the straight line, and everywhere you turn  
There's vultures and thieves at your back  
The storm keeps on twisting, you keep on building the lies  
That make up for all that you lack

\*\*\*Luke's\*\*\*

Luke opens the door to see his son standing on a barstool, his head  
in his hands. Lucky looks up at his father, tears streaming down his  
face.

It don't make no difference, escape one last time  
It's easier to believe  
In this sweet madness, oh this glorious sadness  
That brings me to my knees

Luke goes to him and embraces his son, rocking him gently as if he  
were five years old again. As if his touch could relieve his son of  
any pain or torment.

\*\*\*Bridge\*\*\*

Katie and Jason stand in the cold wind. Their arms wrapped around  
each other, both needing some contact with each other, to know that

there is another feeling in the world besides despair and fear.  
In the arms of the Angel far away from here  
From this dark, cold hotel room, and the endlessness that you feel  
You are pulled from the wreckage of your silent reverie  
You're in the arms of the Angel; may you find some comfort here

\*\*\*Song Credit

Sarah McLachlan

City Of Angels Soundtrack

\*\*\*Thanksgiving Day, eight years ago, Caroline's kitchen\*\*\*

Virginia Benson was waiting in the living room of her house, trying to ignore the noises coming from her kitchen. Two girls, eleven year old Katie, and her fifteen year old daughter, Caroline were giggling and working in the kitchen. When she heard a dish break, one that Virginia feared was from her mother's china, she consoled herself with the fact that Caroline was happy. It was a rare occurrence, but that Katie made Caroline calm, well as calm as Caroline could possibly be.

Inside the kitchen, Caroline switched the radio on, and began dancing to the music while she was stirring the mashed potatoes. The one thing Virginia and Caroline always agreed on was the station to set the radio station too, the oldies station. Van Morrison's ''Brown Eyed Girl'' was blaring on the tiny radio player.

Even Katie was catching Caroline's carefree spirit, as she began bopping to the music. The two started to sing along, giving a tour de force performance in the middle of the kitchen, using their cooking utensils as microphones.

So hard to find my way  
Now that I'm all on my own.  
I saw you just the other day,  
My, how you have grown!  
Cast my memory back there, Lord,  
Sometime I'm overcome thinking about  
Making love in the green grass  
Behind the stadium  
With you, my brown-eyed girl,  
You, my brown-eyed girl.

Do you remember when we used to sing

Sha la la la la la la la la la la dee dah

Laying in the green grass

Sha la la la la la la la la la la dee dah

Dee dah dee dah dee dah dee dah dee dah dee

Sha la la la la la la la la la la la la

Dee dah la dee dah la dee dah la

D-d-d-d-d-d-d-d-d-d-d...

When they finally stopped to take their bows, they were surprised at Virginia clapping in the doorway.

'That was lovely girls, but what in the world is burning?'

Caroline looked at Katie, panic stricken. They furiously began checking pots, finding nothing burning or on fire. They turned back to each other, and Katie said, 'Oh no Caroline, the rolls!'

'OH CRAP!' Caroline said, quickly taking the charred rolls out of the oven. 'I'm sorry.'

'For goodness sake's Caroline, how can you screw up the Pilsbury doughboy?' Virginia asked sarcastically, shaking her head at her hapless daughter.

'Geez, I'm so sorry to screw up your Thanksgiving, Mom,' Caroline said sarcastically.

Katie looked at her friend, already sensing the storm that would take over the room, she quickly said, 'I hate these gummy things anyway. The Pilsbury Doughboy gives me nightmares. Let's just have regular bread.'

Caroline gave Katie a smile and Virginia headed back to the living room, relieved. She just didn't know what to say to her daughter anymore. Caroline raised her eyebrows and said, 'You're scared off the doughboy?'

'Oh shut your mouth,' Katie laughed, throwing the dish towel at Caroline, 'and stir your mashed potatoes.'

\*\*\*Penthouse kitchen\*\*\*

Caroline and Katie are again preparing the Thanksgiving meal, having pushed Sonny out of the kitchen kicking and screaming. This was their tradition, and they didn't want Sonny involved. Katie looked at Carly's reaction towards Sonny suspiciously, and said, 'What's going on between the two of you?'

Carly looked sheepishly at her feet, 'he was having a nightmare last night, and I wanted to make sure he was okay, and I kind of uhmm,

wound up staying the night.'

'Oh Caroline,' Katie said, her jaw dropping, 'You didn'tâ€|'

'NO!' Carly said, blushing a little. 'He needed someone to help him make it through the night, and I guess I did too.'

'Oh, just don't rush things Caroline,' Katie said sternly.

'Yes mother,' Carly mocked, then her expression turned thoughtful. 'So this is the second morning you've curled up on the couch with Jason, what's going on there?'

Katie looked at Carly apprehensively and said, 'I wasn't curled up with him Caroline, he was at the other end. He needed someone to listen to him, and yea, I did too. But I won't go after Jason, I don't think it would be a good idea to get involved with people you've slept with.'

Carly bit her lip, 'Well, I don't mind really. Jason and are friends, and I know and accept that now. You guys look cute together, on the couch I mean.'

'I know you don't mind Caroline, but I do.' Katie smiled, 'And I ALWAYS look cute.'

Carly laughed and said, 'So the guest list includes, Bobbie and Lucas, and Sonny said his dad was coming.'

'Cool. A real Thanksgiving, with like guests,' Katie said.

Carly's laughing was interrupted by Sonny poking his head in the kitchen.

'Hey, we said this is our kitchen MOB boy,' Caroline said playfully throwing the towel at him.

'I know, I know,' Sonny said, smiling. 'But Katie has a guest, uhh, Alexis Davis?'

Katie looked at Caroline in surprise. Caroline shrugged, and Katie said slowly while taking off the makeshift aprons she and Caroline had made, 'Ohkay, I'll be right out.'

Katie went out the door, leaving Sonny and Caroline sheepishly standing in the kitchen.

'So,' Sonny smiled.

'So,' Carly said with a raised eyebrow.

'About last night,' he began awkwardly. Carly saw the warning signals and began to panic.

'It's okay you know,' she stammered. 'I mean it's okay if you like don't want to talk about it. It was just one night, and nothing REALLY happened. It was just two people needing each other, and it won't happen againâ€|'

'CARLY!' Sonny smiled. 'I liked it. I needed it. And I'm thankful.'

'Oh,' Carly said, blushing and looking at her toes.

'AND, I would like it to happen again.'

'OH,' Carly smiled, looking shyly at his face and his lips. She remembered how they felt against hers last night. Her already flushed face turned a deep crimson.

Sonny saw her gaze, and understood her red face. He slowly walked over to her and lifted her chin up, lowering his lips down in one of the sweetest kisses imaginable. They stood there like that, for what seemed like forever, until Jason walked in.

'OH, I'm sorry,' Jason, who never seems to falter in his steadfast emotionlessness, seemed embarrassed. He quickly walked back the way he came, leaving Carly and Sonny to laugh in each others arms.

\*\*\*Q mansion\*\*\*

'I don't care you, you, NAZI,' Edward blathered at the cook, while backing out of her kitchen. 'You would think with the money we pay you, you could manage to make a turkey.'

'Grandfather, yelling at Cook is not going to make matters better,' AJ scolded.

'Oh, be quiet you rascal. I don't see you doing anything to make anything better,' Edward fumed.

AJ was sick of the sly comments Edward was making at him all day. 'God Grandfather, I don't think it's a good day to discuss Michael.'

'That little tramp is back, and you're sitting here, doing nothing. We could have Michael by Christmas if you would take some initiative.'

AJ looked at his Grandfather with an exasperated sigh, he grabbed his jacket and started too the door, running into Emily on the way out.

'AJ? What did you do now Grandfather?' Emily said, her hands on her hips.

'ME? Nothing, AJ is finally going to do his family a favor. I suspect he's headed to Jason's to get Michael.'

Emily gasped and gave her Grandfather a stern look. She walked over to the phone and began to dial Jason's number.

\*\*\*Penthouse living room\*\*\*

Katie stands uncomfortably under Alexis scrutinizing stare. Finally Alexis hands Katie a picture. The picture she found in the attic. Katie's eyes searched it, at first only seeing Alexis and Stefan. Then she saw them, her mother and father embracing in the background.

A gasp escaped from her mouth, ''my mother.''

''Yes,'' Alexis said, with tears in her eyes. ''I knew I had seen your face somewhere. You know about your father?''

''Yes,'' Katie said, desperately trying to keep the tears in her eyes. ''Helena killed my mother when I was six.''

''I'm sorry,'' Alexis said, placing a hand on her shoulder. ''Helena killed my mother too. I suppose I'm your aunt.''

Katie gave a shy smile through her tears, and looked at the picture again, ''Thank you, for the picture.''

''Kate, I suppose you have met Nikolas, or know of Nikolas at the very least. I think the two of you could benefit from knowing one another.''

''I've met Nikolas already,'' Katie said quietly.

''Do me one favor,'' Alexis urged, grabbing Katie's free hand. ''Countless secrets have been kept from Nikolas. Don't let this be another one. I don't know if he could handle it.''

Katie nodded and said, ''I suppose you know why I consider Helena such a threat.''

''Unfortunately, I do,'' Alexis said, hope forming in her eyes, ''I hope that you won't hesitate in coming to me with your problems, we are family.''

Katie gave Alexis a genuine smile and said, ''Would you like to stay for Thanksgiving dinner? We have plenty of food.''

''Of course, if it's not too much of an imposition. I would love to.''

Katie and Alexis began to go into the kitchen when the front door slammed open, Taggert barging his way into the room, despite Reynaldo's attempt at restraint.

''Who in the hell gave you the right to bargain with felons Kate Thomas?'' Taggert fumed.

\*\*\*Luke's\*\*\*

Lucky was awake and had been shuffling around for hours. He called his brother at Wyndemere with a plan. They would be heading over to the penthouse with a bottle of Luke's wine in an hour or so. Lucky had slept on Luke's couch last night, after being found crying at the bar.

Lucky hadn't realized how much emotion he had been pushing into the back of his head. He missed Liz, and he felt lost without her. He had been pushing those feelings out of his mind, fearing them. But last night they blew up, right in his father's arms. In the course of forty-eight hours, his anger at his father had melted. He had learned to forgive. Liz would have been proud.

Nikolas came walking in the bar, with a basket of scones. He smiled

and said, ''Are you ready?''

''I think I should be asking you that,'' Lucky smiled.

''I'm definitely ready.''

''Then let's get out of here bro,'' Lucky said, grabbing the wine and his jacket.

Nikolas smiled at his brother's terms of endearment, neither had really acknowledged their friendship out loud. But they were both grateful for each other.

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

''Happy Thanksgiving Marcus!'' Katie chirped cheerfully.

''Don't pull the cute act Kate, what you did was wrong,'' Taggart fumed, looking at Alexis with a glare.

Alexis returned the glare and cut in, ''I gather that you are an agent Detective Taggart. I can explain everything.''

''You gather correctly, Miss Davis,'' Taggart said angrily. ''And I don't need you to explain anything. I need you to separate yourself from this case.''

''Marcus,'' Katie said sweetly. ''This is for the best, it won't be a problem to protect Luke and Alexis. And we really do need them. Now I think Caroline is burning something, so if you'll excuse me.''

Katie hightailed it out of the living room, knowing that Taggart would accept the plan. She just had to work him the right way. Leaving Taggart while he was blowing off steam was always a good idea. Alexis could prove her worth now.

Alexis looked warily at Taggart and said, ''I do really believe you need me Detective Taggart. Helena is a considerable foe, and Luke and I have vast knowledge of her ways.''

''I know dammit,'' Taggart said rubbing his head. ''That Katie, she really knows how to get her way.''

''She's an endearing child,'' Alexis smiled.

''Child my aaahhs, uh right foot,'' Taggart said feebly. ''She's smarter and more capable than most agents I know.''

Alexis nodded, while Taggart observed her. He finally said, ''So Lexie Davis Cassadine, what are you doing here?''

''It's Alexis Davis, and I was invited to dinner,'' Alexis said, her smile fading.

''Oh, really. Well I guess I'm invited too.'' Taggart smiled.

Jason entered the room staring at Alexis and Taggart. He was obviously confused at their presence. Taggart grinned and said, ''Happy Turkeyday Angerboy.''



Jason looked from one to another until Reynaldo peeked his head in,  
'Emily is here Mr. Morgan.'

Emily walked in to see the raggle-taggle bunch that had assembled in the living room. Sonny and Carly walked in laughing, and looked surprised to see the guests that had accumulated.

'Hi everybody,' Sonny said. 'Happy Thanksgiving.'

\*\*\*Luke's\*\*\*

Luke came down stairs to see that his son had already left. He was worried about him. Luke had made up his mind to find a place for his boy to stay. He knew Lucky felt uncomfortable here, and he didn't seem to want to burden his mother. So Luke grabbed his keys and headed to the penthouse. His sweet niece Caroline owed him one. And he grinned, she deserved having to put up with Lucky's occasionally obnoxious behavior.

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Bobbie had arrived with Lucas and Mike. She brought over a special pie for Lucas, and the girls dragged her into the kitchen. The guest list was growing rapidly and they needed to make more food. The activity in the kitchen was in direct contrast the men in the living room. Lucas and Jason were playing a video game. When Sonny and Taggart weren't taking turns making fun of each other Sonny was talking with Mike and Taggart was playing with baby Michael. Reynaldo poked his head in again at this domestic scene and cleared his throat. 'Lucky Spencer and Nikolas Cassadine are here sir.'

Jason looked at Sonny in surprise, Sonny said, 'Did the girls invite them?'

Jason sighed and said, 'I wouldn't be surprised, everyone else in Port Charles seemed to be invited.'

'Hi,' Lucky said brightly. 'We thought that you guys wouldn't mind a few extra guests.'

Lucky and Nikolas looked at the group of men (and baby Michael) assembled in the room. Nikolas was about to say something when loud music blared from the kitchen.

Hey, where did we go

Days when the rains came?

Down in the hollow

Playing a new game,

Laughing and a-running, hey, hey,

Skipping and a-jumping

In the misty morning fog with

Our, our hearts a-thumping

And you, my brown-eyed girl,

You, my brown-eyed girl.

The guys took turns peeking into the kitchen. Carly and Katie were the most animated, dancing around and singing to each other. Emily was a close second, obviously enjoying this semi-normal female bonding experience. She looked her age for once and happy, not some Quartermaine prisoner. Nikolas looked appreciatively at the happy girl before his eyes. Her brown hair sawying around her face, he blushed remembering what happened last night. Conflicting emotions ran rampant in his head, he was happy to see her, but he couldn't forget the kiss they shared.

Whatever happened

To Tuesday and so slow

Going down to the old mine with a

Transistor radio.

Standing in the sunlight laughing

Hide behind a rainbow's wall,

Slipping and a-sliding

All along the waterfall

With you, my brown-eyed girl,

You, my brown-eyed girl.

Bobbie couldn't help but join in with the joyful activities, her grin spread across her face when Carly pulled her mother into a tango routine. Even Alexis started to sway to the music, thoroughly enjoying herself.

Do you remember when we used to sing

Sha la la la la la la la la la la dee dah

Just like that

Sha la la la la la la la la la la dee dah

La dee dah.

The girl's exuberant behavior was cut off by uproarious laughter in the next room. All the women in the kitchen stormed off into the living room, looking angry and embarrassed at the men assembled in the room.

'You guys can just shut your mouths now,' Carly said in mock anger, her hands on her hips, forgetting that she had the spoon she used in her mashed potatoes in her hand. Sonny laughed even louder at the sight of smeared mashed potatoes on Carly's hip.

'Ha ha very funny,' Bobbie said, her eyes wide with indignation, wiping the potatoes off of Carly's hip. She looked at Lucas who was rolling with laughter.

'You looked so funny mom,' he giggled.

'I'm glad I could amuse you,' Bobbie said sarcastically.

'You know Lexie,' Taggert said, wiping the tears of laughter from under his eyes, 'maybe you should dance like that in court, you might win a few more cases.'

Katie couldn't help but smile at the group before her, even at Lucky and Nikolas, and she didn't even know where they came from. She saw the door open, Luke Spencer walking in wrinkling his nose. He looked at the group of people assembled in the living room and said, 'Some party, but what's burning?'

Carly and Katie looked at each other in despair. They knew what was burning, they knew it burned every year, they said simultaneously, 'THE ROLLS!'

They ran into the kitchen and pulled out the charred remnants of bread.

Carly laughed and said, 'I can't even get the Pilsbury doughboy right.'

Katie smiled and grabbed her arm, 'I'm scared of the doughboy any way Caroline.'

Nikolas walked up behind them and tapped Katie's arm. He offered her his basket of scones and said, 'I brought these, so don't worry about the biscuits.'

Katie smiled and took the basket, 'thanks,' she said shyly.

'Can we eat now?' Jason said impatiently, 'Before more people show up?'

'Yes Jason we can eat now,' Carly laughed.

\*\*\*Cottage\*\*\*

Robin answers the door to see AJ standing there sheepishly with bags of food.

'Happy Thanksgiving,' AJ says, offering Robin a bag. 'I brought dinner.'

'Thanks AJ, Happy Thanksgiving,' Robin takes the bag and lets AJ in the cottage, happy to have any human being near her.

\*\*\*Ten minutes later\*\*\*

The penthouse living room is set up with a bunch of tables pushed together, thirteen chairs and a high chair. Jason, Sonny, Carly, Katie, Emily, Lucas, Bobbie, Mike, Alexis, Nikolas, Lucky, Reynaldo, Luke and Baby Michael have finally settled down to enjoy the feast before them.

Jason has surprisingly volunteered to cut the turkey, and is surprisingly good at it, Bobbie whispers to Carly that it must be the doctor side shining through once more. After the turkey is passed around, Carly smiles and says, ''I'm not much for religion, but I have something I'd like to say. About a year ago, I had nothing. I was alone and miserable. It makes me truly happy and thankful to see everyone here, family,'' she looks at Bobbie, Luke, Lucky and Lucas, ''and friends,'' she grins at Jason and Sony, ''new acquaintances,'' she looks at Alexis, Taggert, Emily, Nikolas and Mike, ''and people I definitely couldn't live without.'' She smiles happily at Katie and her baby Michael.

The heartfelt little speech is met with words of agreement and happiness. And this group of people thrown together for reasons beyond their control, enjoyed each others company, and truly gave thanks for one another.

## Chapter 12

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

The tables have been cleared off the Thanksgiving dinner. Reynaldo has returned to his position at the door. The girls are in the kitchen, picking at leftovers and making plates for people to take home. The men are in the living room, watching the Pittsburgh Detroit football game for no other reason than the women seem to expect them too. Jason is trying to understand the whole tradition and explain it to Michael at the same time.

''So, even though your Mom hates to do housework,'' Jason said, his brow wrinkled in confusion, ''She's in the kitchen, doing housework. And I don't like TV, but I'm here watching it. Thanksgiving is when things that don't always happen do happen and people do things they normally don't. Weird huh?''

Michael giggles and bounces on Jason's lap, begging to be put on the floor to crawl around. Jason complies, placing the boy on the ground. Michael speeds away to sit by Sonny and Taggert for a little while.

''I can't believe that just happened,'' Sonny said, shaking his head at the TV. ''Bettis called tails for god's sakes. What is the ref's problem?''

''I don't know man,'' Taggert said, picking up Michael and pretending to throw him in the air. ''Hey red, what's up? Where's your Mom?''

''She's in the kitchen being domestic,'' Sonny smiled.

''So you have it pretty sweet here Corinthos,'' Taggert said slyly. ''Two pretty girls waiting on you hand and foot. So what's your fancy the blond or the brunette?''

''Tagz, come on that's rude,'' Sonny laughed, ''besides Katie's only nineteen.''

''I see,'' Taggert said knowingly, placing the antsy Michael back on the floor.

Michael crawled over to Lucky and Nikolas, who were silently watching the game.

'I don't really understand all of this,' Nikolas said, referring to the game.

Lucky laughed and said, 'Figures.' He picked up Michael into his lap and said to Nikolas in a low voice. 'So, are you going to talk to Katie?'

'If your cousin ever stops watching her like a guard dog I will,' Nikolas said playing with Michael's hands. Michael giggles happily and looks up at the tall figure that just approached Nikolas and Lucky.

'Lucky,' Luke nodded, and remembering his need to make Laura happy he said, 'Nikolas, how are you?'

'Uhh, fine,' Nikolas said, blown away at Luke's lack of sarcasm and rudeness.

'So, cowboy,' Luke said bending over and making a goofy face at Michael. 'Are you planning on going back to your Mom tonight?'

'No,' Lucky said, letting Michael crawl. 'Don't worry about it. I don't think I'll need your couch tonight either.'

'Oh,' Luke said, picking up baby Michael, who was tugging at Luke's pants. 'Hey tiger, want to go to your Mom? I'll see you both tomorrow at the club, you have a lot of planning to do for this party you've decided to throw.'

Lucky and Nikolas look at each other in surprise. Lucky says sheepishly, 'About the party Dad, I'm sorry I should have asked you first.'

'Hey no skin off of my teeth,' Luke smiled, 'Port Charles is way overdue for a bash that will knock it on its behind, right Mikey?' The baby giggled and grabbed Luke's nose, 'hey, let go of my schnooz. Let's go to your momma.'

Nikolas and Lucky look at each other with surprised smiles on their faces. Then a moment of realization passes over Nikolas' face. 'If your Dad is talking to Carly, then Katie is aloneâ€¦'

The sound of women in the kitchen squealing at the sight of baby Michael makes Lucky grimace. 'If you can call all of those girls alone, yea I guess so.'

Caroline walks out of the kitchen with Luke, and they go to talk in the hallway between penthouses. Lucky looks at Nikolas and smiles again, 'come on let's go.'

\*\*\*Cottage\*\*\*

Robin and AJ are standing at the door. Robin looks at AJ appreciatively and says, 'I'm glad that you came AJ. I'm really thankful. With all of this stuff happening with Jason and all, I

really didn't feel like going to Uncle Mac's.'

'I definitely understand,' AJ smiled. 'If there is anyone on this earth that can understand a family not accepting them is me.'

'Its just that Uncle Mac will just, you know say I told you so or something. And I couldn't handle that,' Robin says bashfully looking down at her shoes.

AJ puts his hand on her shoulder and gives her a sympathetic smile, 'I know. Look, are you doing anything tomorrow?'

'I wasn't planning on it. There are no classes on Black Friday.'

'Well, it being Black Friday,' AJ smiled. 'Maybe you and I could do a little Christmas shopping together?'

Robin smiled, thinking of how much a weapon AJ could be against Carly. She nodded and said, 'Yea, that would be perfect.'

\*\*\*Penthouse Hallway\*\*\*

'So Carly-o-line,' Luke smiles slyly. 'I was hoping you would do me a favor.'

Carly raises her eyebrows and says, 'And just what would that be?'

'See Lucky, he needs a place to stay,' Luke says seriously. 'Home just isn't the place for him, the girl who I'm pretty sure he's over the moon for just left town. His mom and me need to work things out still. And I just don't want my son living in a boxcar for the holiday season.'

Carly bites her lip and looks sympathetically at her Uncle. She gives a slow smile and says, 'Well there are no rooms in this penthouse, but Katie has extra rooms in that one,' she points to the penthouse across the hall, 'I'm sure she'd be happy to have company.'

'Good,' Luke says, smiling at his niece, 'And thank you Caroline.'

'You're welcome Uncle Luke,' Carly raises her eyebrows in an amused gesture, 'This doesn't mean that we're friends now does it?'

'Don't push it sweetheart, we're family. That's bad enough.'

\*\*\*Penthouse Kitchen\*\*\*

Lucky walks in and goes to his Aunt Bobbie and says, 'So what kind of leftovers can you feed a poor boy?'

Bobbie looks at him incredulously and Alexis says, 'You ate three plates worth of food Lucky.'

'I'm a growing boy,' Lucky says in mock indignation. The disturbance he's caused lets Nikolas say a few quiet words to Katie, who follows Nikolas upstairs.

Nikolas and Katie enter a room and Katie looks around confused, 'Where's Caroline?'

'I'm sorry I lied, she's talking with Luke,' Nikolas says quietly.

Katie looks angry and begins to walk out of the room when Nikolas grabs her arm, and says, 'Wait, I need to talk to you,' he looks at her earnestly, seeing his own eyes replicated in hers. 'I overheard you and Jason talking yesterday.'

Katie's head reruns her conversations with Jason and comes to the realization that Nikolas overheard her saying that she was a Cassadine, her hand flies to her mouth and she looks at Nikolas with tears in her eyes.

'So I gather you aren't going to deny it,' Nikolas says. 'I appreciate that honesty, but when exactly were you going to drop this bombshell on me?'

'I was deciding,' Katie said, not really realizing what she was saying.

'Deciding?' Nikolas says angrily, 'if I was worthy or something? If you wanted me for family?'

'NO,' Katie says, her temper flaring at Nikolas' anger, 'Deciding if you would accept me.'

Nikolas looked at his hands and then back at Katie, 'This sounds heartless, but I have to know. Do you have proof?'

Katie reached down for something in her pocket and pulls out a necklace. Nikolas recognizes two trinkets on the chain. Both were Cassadine medallions. She opened one to show a picture of a woman that looked like a more delicate version of Katie, inscribed on the one side was the name Monique.

'My mother,' Katie said quietly. She opened the other medallion, which contained a picture of a girl not quite five years old. Black hair, dark eyes, Katie and six years old. Inscribed on the other side was the name Katyana. 'Me.'

Nikolas took the locket from her, and looked tenderly at the picture of Katie, she looked like a happy child, albeit a little tired. Her mother and Katie must have had to run from Helena, Nikolas thought grimly.

Katie thought his inspection of the picture was in disbelief, she pulled the picture Alexis had given her out of her back pocket and handed it to him. 'Our father and my mother,' she said quietly.

Nikolas looked at the picture of his father. He didn't resemble what the other photographs looked like. He seemed so happy. Nikolas handed

the items to Katie and said quietly, ''I believe you. I assume that Helena doesn't know you exist.''

''For now she doesn't,' ' Katie said, keeping in mind Alexis' advise and being truthful to Nikolas. ''That may change tomorrow at Luke's.''

Nikolas looked sharply at Katie, ''That could be very dangerous. Helena wouldn't think twice about killing you.''

''I know,' ' Katie said quietly, tears coming to her eyes. ''She killed my mother.''

Nikolas looked at this girl, his sister and his heart broke. The tears in her brown eyes threatened to spill out. He fiercely wanted to protect her. He grabbed her hand and held it in his and said fiercely, ''I'll be here for you. If you need anything. I don't know what you have planned for Helena, but I'll help.''

Katie gave Nikolas a bewildered look and said nervously, ''Thank you.''

''You are my sister after all,' ' Nikolas smiled, unintentionally causing the tears in Katie's eyes to fall freely down her cheeks. He couldn't help but find his own tears falling also and grabbed his sister into a fierce hug that seemed as if it would seal their relationship forever.

\*\*\*Penthouse living room\*\*\*

Alexis is gathering her things, plus a bag of leftover food. She still had some planning to do for tomorrow's party. She turned around to see Taggert smiling like an idiot.

''Hello Lexusss,' ' Taggert's grin got even wider, ''need a ride home?''

''Actually Luke was going to drive me home in that pink monstrosity of a car,' ' Alexis says looking around.

''Luke left,' ' Taggert said casually, ''Guess I'm your night in shining armor.''

Alexis bit her lip, thinking about elements of the plan that she had to put in motion for tomorrow. She grimaced as if in pain and said, ''Fine, thank you. Carly, I had the best time. I can't thank you enough.''

''I had a good time too, I'll see you tomorrow?'' Carly smiled as Jason stood behind her with a perplexed face. Taggert happily followed a morose Alexis out the door. Bobbie, Lucas and Mike were next.

''This was so nice, Carly,' ' Bobbie said as she hugged her daughter.

''I'm glad you had fun mama,' ' Carly said quietly, the word bringing shivers down her spine. She pulled away from the embrace, ''And I'll see you tomorrow night right?''



Bobbie smiled and said, ''I wouldn't miss it.''

Carly bent down to look her brother in the eye, ''You too squirt, bring your dancing shoes and get ready to cut a rug with your big sis.''

Bobbie smiled at her son and daughter interactions, especially when Lucas hugged Carly and said, ''I'm glad you're back Carly. I missed you.''

Mike grinned at his son and said, ''I'm glad you're back too Sonny.''

Sonny smiled at his Dad and gave him a quick hug, ''Back to stay Pop.''

''Good, '' Mike said as he walked out the door.

Lucky walked up next and said sheepishly, ''Thanks, for not poisoning me and stuff.''

Carly rolled her eyes at her cousin's humor or lack thereof. ''Where do you think you're going?''

''Home?'' Lucky said tentatively.

''Right across the hall, '' Carly grinned, pointing at the other penthouse.

''I'm fine Carly, I really don't need a place to stay, '' Lucky began.

''Don't argue with me you little brat. You're name is Lucky not Luke. Blankets and stuff should be in the closet closest to the door. Get some sleep, we have a big day tomorrow.''

Lucky smiles at his cousin and says, ''You're not so bad Cuz.''

''Thanks for nothing, '' Carly sneered at Lucky's figure going across the hall.

''Can someone please explain something to me?'' Jason said, even more confusion wrinkling his brow. ''What is tomorrow night?''

''Party at Luke's, '' Caroline smiled at both Sonny and Jason. ''It's for a good cause. Katie has some sort of plan with Helena. You BOTH have the be there.''

''Shindig at Luke's, '' Sonny said nodding, ''I can dig that.''

''You better dig it brother, '' Carly smiled. ''I expect the both of you to be dancing machines. Don't argue. I don't want to hear it. If you don't know how, learn. I don't ask for much, but I expect this. I will be SO mad if you don't dance, '' Carly's grin got even wider. ''Now if you don't mind. I'm going to bed.''

\*\*\*Half an hour later\*\*\*

Sonny and Jason are sitting on the couch, a pile of videos between them, 'Flashdance', 'Shall We Dance?' 'Singing in the Rain', some 'Lord of the Dance' type video. They are currently watching Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire glide across the TV screen.

Sonny groans, 'This is going to be no fun.'

Katie hops down the stairs, Nikolas walking calmly behind her. 'What's no fun?' Katie said cheerfully.

'Dancing,' Jason said, barely taking his eyes off of the image of Rogers and Astaire.

'Oh yea, Caroline and I really want you to dance,' Katie smiled. 'I wouldn't let us down, you have to live with us.'

Sonny glared, 'We'll try to live up to your lofty expectations.'

Katie laughs and walks with Nikolas out the door, and yawns, 'I have gotten zero sleep in the past two days, I'm going to sleep forever.'

'Well I hope not,' Nikolas smiles. 'I expect you to save me a dance tomorrow.'

'Of course,' Katie grins as Nikolas steps into the elevator.

'Katya,' Nikolas says as he steps into the elevator.

'Yes?'

'I'm really glad that you're here,' he says as the doors to the elevator slide shut.

'Me too,' Katie says, hopping over to her penthouse door, she skips into the dark room and jumps headfirst onto the couch.

'OOOF!'

'Oh my god!' Katie said jumping from her landing place on the couch and switching on the light. 'Lucky Spencer, what are you doing here?'

Lucky rubbed his stomach, 'I'm wallowing in my pain, do you mind? Carly said I could stay here, I didn't know what room to sleep in so I thought I would take the couch.'

'Oh,' Katie said sleepily. 'Why aren't you at home, like with your parents?'

'Family problems,' Lucky said meeting Katie's suspicious face with a grimace. 'I'd really rather not talk about it.'

Katie shook her head, her sleepy mind coming to a realization. 'By the way,' she yawned. 'Nikolas knows that I'm Stavros' daughter.' Lucky looks up sharply, and Katie smiles smugly, 'I'd rather not talk about it. You can have the second door on the left. The bed should be made and everything. Sleep tight.'

Katie ruffled Lucky's hair as she passed him, padding down up the stairs in her bare feet. Lucky looked up at the girl who had just dropped a bombshell and smiled muttering, ''Can't believe that girl is a Cassadine,'' and following Katie upstairs to his new home.

\*\*\*The next evening, Penthouse\*\*\*

''CAROLINE!'' Katie called across the hall, surprising the guard in the corridor between the two penthouses. Katie barged into Carly's penthouse, obviously panicked. ''Caroline! I need your help!''

Jason ran down the stairs, having thrown on most of his Armani suit, he looked around and at the panicked Katie, ''What is it Thomas? Helena?''

Katie grinned sheepishly, ''No actually, I just need Caroline, she needs to help me get ready.''

''Don't ever scare me like that,'' Jason said, trying to adjust his clothing. He was wearing shirt underneath his gray Armani suit, he even had a tie in his hand. He looked so helpless that Katie couldn't help but go to him and help him straighten his shirt. She began to tie his silver gray tie when Carly came down, her hair in large curlers.

''Hey Katie-did, what did you need?'' Carly looked at Jason's appearance, approvingly. ''You hate ties Jason.''

''Sonny thought it would look better,'' Jason said sourly, obviously not enjoying this game of dress-up.

''Sonny thought what?'' Sonny said as he came down the stairs with Michael, surveying Carly's appearance with a smile. ''Nice hair Carly.''

Carly sneered and looked to Katie again who was pulling her arm by now. Katie said, ''Come on Caroline, you know I need your help.''

''I swear Katie, someday, you'll need to learn to do your own make-up,'' Caroline sighed, but then flashed Katie a grin. She loved to play dress-up with Katie.

Latecia walked into the penthouse with an armful of grocery bags. Caroline greeted her warmly, ''Hey Latecia, just in time for some female bonding. Whenever you want, come on over to the other penthouse and help us transform Katie into a beautiful princess.''

''I'll be right over Miss Roberts,'' Latecia smiled at the exuberant blond racing over to the other penthouse with Katie. She liked Carly and Katie more than she could ever like Miss Scorpio. She looked at Jason and Sonny and smiled. ''Looks like you'll be having a good time tonight.''

Jason sighed and Sonny rolled his eyes.

Latecia laughed, ''I guess it not.''

\*\*\*Luke's\*\*\*

Lucky and Nikolas are hanging festive silver and gold decorations all over Luke's bar. Luke walks in with a case of champagne.

''Looking nice guys,'' Luke whistled. ''Are you ready for a big night?''

Lucky smiled and Nikolas looked at Luke tentatively, ''Do you know what Katie has planned?''

''Sure I do, but if she wants you two Hardy Boys to know, I guess she'll tell you,'' Luke smiled exuding charm.

Just then Laura walked in with an adorable Lulu. The little girl was wearing a beautiful blue party dress, and her hair was lightly curled at the ends. When she saw her brothers she skipped towards them gleefully, ''Lucky and Nikky!''

''Hey squirt,'' Lucky said gathering his sister in his arms.

Nikolas patted her back and said, ''Do you want to help us decorate Lesley Lu?''

Lulu giggled and the three siblings began to strategically place balloons around the room, leaving Laura to talk to Luke.

''You look beautiful darlin,'' Luke said quietly, almost blushing. Laura did look gorgeous, her hair piled on the top of her head, with her bangs framing her beautiful face. She wore a burgundy dress that made her face glow with some golden light. She took his breath away.

''Thank you,'' Laura said, looking happily at her three children. ''They look so perfect together.''

Laura said the last sentence as a trial for Luke, to see what he said about Nikolas' relationship with Lulu and Lucky. He smiled and said, ''They sure do.''

She looked at him happily, her always-ready tears making her eyes shine.

\*\*\*Penthouse 1\*\*\*

Latecia walks back into the room that Jason and Sonny were waiting in. Sonny looked at her expectantly and said, ''Where are they?''

''Miss Roberts insists that you pick them up at the other penthouse,'' Latecia couldn't help but laugh. Carly sure wanted this to be like the prom night she never had.

''Fine,'' Sonny sighed. He walked across the hall with Jason following after handing Michael to Latecia. They arrived in the hall in time to see Katie walking out of the penthouse. Her hair was pulled off of her face and hanging down her back in soft ringlets,

she wore a little makeup, just the perfect color reddish brown lipstick to make her skin look like cream. Her dress was a pale yellow and had an empire waist. The skirt flared out in an appealing floating way, and the dress went to the floor, only allowing a peek of Katie's strappy high heels and the one soft layer of chiffon that was an underskirt.

'Wow,' Sonny said, letting out a slow whistle.

Katie blushed and grinned sheepishly, looking even more like a fairy princess than ever. She looked at Jason, with her eyebrows raised as if looking for approval. He smiled slightly and extended his arm to her. Katie accepted and turned around as Carly came out of the door. She knew what Carly had looked like a few seconds ago, but she looked fifteen thousand times more astonishing than she did before. Katie figured it was the glow Caroline got, almost as if she was a performer.

Sonny looked stunned at Carly's appearance. Her hair was in an intricate bun, with ringlets coming out at the end. Her hair was interwoven with tiny star like red flowers that matched her red dress perfectly. And what a little red dress it was. It was a fairly simple cut, long and sleek. It had two skinny straps holding the v-neckline dress up. Every seductive curve of Carly's body showed up in this elegant red dress. It was the perfect color to play off of Carly's brown eyes and golden skin. Carly wasn't a fairy princess, she was a queen.

'Well?' Carly demanded. 'Say something.'

Sonny began stuttering, something that sounded like you look absolutely unbelievably. His mutterings were cut off by Jason's steady voice saying, 'You look great Carly and you know it. Now let's go get this whole thing over with.'

Carly rolled her eyes at Jason's practical nature, took Sonny's arm and blew Michael a kiss.

\*\*\*Luke's\*\*\*

Stefan entered the loud club, already filling with citizens of Port Charles. Emily, Lucky and Nikolas were huddled in a corner, talking intently. The only Quartermaine present was Ned, who escorted a beautifully dressed Alexis. For some strange reason, members of the PCPD were there, Stefan couldn't place the nervous, flighty, gorgeous brunette and the Hispanic man following her every move, but he did recognize the tall, arrogant, bald man. Taggart was scowling at every person in the room, especially at Ned Quartermaine. Then Stefan saw Laura and Lulu, who were enjoying themselves at the table with Bobbie and Luke. Stefan smiled at the perfect family portrait in front of him, he didn't belong there. But he would be damned if wouldn't make a situation where he did belong.

Just as Stefan approached the bar, four young people entered the room, followed by a few heavily muscled young men. One of the young women caught his eye, a stunning raven-haired beauty that reminded him of someone from a long time ago. He couldn't place her face right away and brushed it off as a coincidence.

Luke saw the arrival and gave a low wolf whistle, 'Well Caroline and

Katie, you two sure clean up nicely.'

Laura looked up at whom her husband was addressing, and was shocked to see a remarkably familiar place. It only took Laura a few moments for everything to click together and she calmly took Lulu's hand and said to Luke, 'It's really time for Lulu to go to sleep. Thanks you for inviting us Luke. I'll see you tomorrow.'

Luke looked strangely at his wife, not even trying to guess the reason for her departure. He concentrated on the task before hand. Jason said before Luke could open his mouth, 'I'll be receiving a call once she starts to move. I don't think it will be anytime soon. Her boat docked five minutes ago.'

Luke nodded nervously and smiled, 'So, I guess we have a few minutes to dance yet, I'll be right back,' he rushed over to the turntable and placed a record on the table. A blare of big band music filled the room and soon Frank Sinatra's smooth voice filled the air.

'So, you wanted to dance?' Sonny said nervously, taking Carly's hand.

'Yes,' Carly smiled and she moved to the makeshift dancefloor, moving awkwardly to the music.

There may be trouble ahead

But while there's music and moonlight and love and  
romance

Let's face the music and dance

Emily grabbed Nikolas' hand and headed onto the dance floor, neither saying a word. They just began to sway gracefully, each understanding what the other needed, time to figure things out.

Alexis looked around for Ned, but turned to see Taggart's grinning face. 'So want to dance Lexie?'

Alexis looked warily at Taggart and finally smiled and nodded. Taggart led her onto the dance floor and shocked Alexis when he began to disco dance. He laughed at her shocked face and grabbed her waist, pulling her into a tight, jazzy sway.

Before the fiddlers have fled

Before they ask us to pay the bill, and while we still have that  
chance

Let's face the music and dance

Sonny dropped Carly's hands and said, 'This isn't working.'

Carly looked at him with a hurt look of surprise. Sonny had given up on trying to dance like Fred Astaire and pulled Carly unimaginably close to him and the two began a slow sexy sway that did not even fit the music. Sonny didn't seem to care, he kissed her neck lightly and said, 'This is much more like it.'

Jason looked sheepishly at Katie and took her hand. He was struck by her confusion and stammered, ''You wanted to dance right?''

Katie acquiesced and she was soon gliding gracefully across the small dance floor in Jason's arms.

Soon, we'll be without the moon

Humming a different tune - and then...

To say that Jason's move's caused a stir was an understatement. Everyone stopped and stared. Carly said quietly to Sonny, ''I can understand Katie, she used to take lessons. But where in the world did Jason learn to move like that?''

Sonny smiled and said, ''Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, I think it was Top Hat or something.''

Carly's eyes looked as if they were about to pop out of her head when Jason twirled Katie around the floor.

There may be teardrops to shed

So (But) while there's music and moonlight (moonlight and music) and love and

romance

(Let's face the music and dance, dance)

(Let's face the music - let's here that music)

Let's face the music and dance

No one was more surprised than Katie was when Jason dipped her, and they stood there, him holding her in his arms and they laughed at the applause they were getting.

''Impressive Morgan,'' Katie grinned.

''Thanks Thomas,'' Jason smiled, still holding Katie in the dip position. They were both smiling and happy. The Katie felt Jason's cell phone ringing through his jacket and both their bodies, that had moved so gracefully and naturally seconds ago, tensed up in nervous anticipation€|

## Chapter 13

\*\*\*Luke's and upstairs room\*\*\*

Helena is walking around, quite confused. Things couldn't possibly have changed as much as they have. She swore that her spies were doing their jobs inadequately. She knew that Lucky and Nikolas had reached a tenuous reconciliation, but she could see the brothers laughing together. 'And Luke was allowing this?' Helena wondered. This was ridiculous. The Spencer's were having a huge celebration and both Stefan and Luke were present.

''This is most strange,'' Helena said aloud. She was preparing to go

downstairs, after sneaking in through the back entrance. It was effortless; Luke was really slipping on his defenses. Just because Stefan was not attacking Luke, did not mean that she would not. Helena beamed at her good fortune. Both Mr. Morgan and Mr. Corinthos were there. As was the newest Spencer, Caroline. She would have to watch their interactions tonight, and use her knowledge to her advantage.

Then Helena lost her footing on the throw rug in the room; she hit the floor and blacked out.

\*\*\*Cottage\*\*\*

AJ and robin are entering the cottage with countless bags. They both seem to be enjoying each other's company.

'Thanks AJ,' Robin said, with a genuine smile plastered on her face. 'I had a great time.'

AJ looked at Robin with incredulity, 'You know,' he said humbly, 'I don't know if I was the cause for that great time. You seemed in the mood to have a great time.'

Robin laughed and looked up with a smile. AJ looked at her appreciatively and said, 'You know Robin, I haven't seen you smile like this in a long time. I'm glad I can be part of the reason for your, uhh happiness.'

Robin pondered AJ's words and finally nodded, 'I haven't been this happy in A LONG time.'

They started to put bags down and take off their coats, Robin turned to AJ with a smile and asked, 'Would you like some tea or coffee?'

'Uhh, actually I had a question,' AJ said, his face turning serious and a glint of hope coming into his eyes. 'The other day, you said that you didn't think Michael belonged with Jason, did you mean it?'

\*\*\*Luke's Club\*\*\*

Carly, Sonny, Taggert and Jason are sitting at the table. Nikolas and Lucky walk up with some drinks.

'Any word?' Carly asks the boys nervously.

They solemnly shake their heads no, Carly wrings her paper napkin even more and looks at Lucky angrily, 'Maybe your insane father should come out and give us a report. Do you think that would kill him?' she looked at Nikolas, 'And your cousin, aunt whatever. They should be keeping us up to date.'

Lucky looked at his cousin with worry, 'Carly, calm down. Katie is probably fine. I'm sure she can handle herself.'

'Actually, I know she can handle herself,' Nikolas said reassuringly, 'I saw her in action the other night.'

'Come on Carly,' Sonny squeezed her shoulder, 'You're really



working yourself up over nothing.'

Carly looked angrily at Lucky, Nikolas and Sonny and turned pleadingly to Jason. 'Tell me I'm not overreacting Jase, this is a big deal. And that evil Cassadine woman is VERY dangerous.'

Jason looked at Carly and then looked at the other guys at that table. He shrugged, not being able to lie to Carly's worried face; 'I'm worried too. Very worried.'

'SEE!' Carly said to Sonny. 'Maybe they need our help.'

'No,' Lucky said calmly, pulling Carly back down on her chair. 'They'll be fine.'

Nikolas looked thoughtfully at this impulsive Spencer in front of him; 'You really care about Katie don't you?'

Sonny, Lucky and Taggert gave Nikolas a duh look and Carly said quietly, 'Katie's my best friend. She's my sister; you know the only family I had for the longest time. And I've always been able to protect her. And now that I can't I just feel so helpless,' Carly said as her voice cracked. The only thing keeping the tears in her eyes was Sonny rubbing her back. She smiles and says, 'Can an of you honestly say that you aren't absolutely enchanted with her?'

Lucky smiles and says, 'She's cool.'

Sonny laughs and says, 'You know I love her.'

'I'm so happy she found me,' Nikolas says quietly.

'Kate is the best partner I could have,' Taggert says honestly.

Jason takes a moment to think. Kate Thomas, five foot seven and a half inches without high heels. She had told him that during their first all night long conversation. She was an endearing person, her brown eyes full of emotion. It was hard to explain to him, but when she did things, she seemed to do them without any mistakes. 'She doesn't fumble,' he said to himself. And she gives her happiness to you almost; she had a lot of Carly in her, the temper, and the survivor quality. But she also had a lot more. She accepted things in life and made them work. She understood what had happened with Robin, even when he himself didn't understand. It was something he couldn't quite articulate. He smiled.

Sonny noticed Jason's pause and laughed to himself. He saw Carly's expectant stare and kicked Jason's foot under the table.

'Oh yea,' Jason said, jolted back to reality. 'Thomas is my friend.'

Carly rolled her eyes and looked around the empty bar. Helena had arrived an hour ago. The guests had left already. The only other people in the building were the five of them, Luke, Alexis, Katie and Helena. The one person Carly couldn't protect Katie from.

\*\*\*Upstairs in Luke's\*\*\*

Helena awoke suddenly. She wasn't in the room she had passed out in. Damn that Spencer and his cheap throw rugs and improper sense of décor. She struggled to her feet and realized she must not be in Luke's anymore at all.

'Oh my god,' Helena thought, 'that bastard Luke found me.'

'Where are you Luke?' she called out, looking around the black room. The entirely black room, the only thing of color in the room was the single ray of light coming from the keyhole.

'Really Luke,' she said with annoyance. 'All black? This is worse than Wyndemere.'

She walked to the keyhole and bent to peer through it. Suddenly she heard a whisper. 'So Luke wants to play a game. Fine,' she thought grimly. There was a slight whisper again. 'All right Luke, this is enough.' Helena said with exasperation.

'Helena.' The female voice whispered again.

'Who is there?' Helena asked, not finding humor in this absurd trick of Luke's Spencer's.

'Helena,' the voice said again, louder.

'I do not find the amusement in this game you insist on playing Luke, let me out of here,' Helena rapped on the door.

'Helena,' the voice said. It was definitely getting closer. It had a French accent.

Helena looked around angrily and said, 'I demand that you let me out of here.' Suddenly an image appeared on the black wall. A girl, tall and slender, with black hair falling around her face in soft waves and curls. She was wearing a simple white gown, and a Cassadine medallion.

Helena gasped and the image laughed and said, 'Remember me Helena?'

'This is impossible. I don't know what kind of games you are playing Luke, but I want no part of this.'

'Really Helena, there is no Luke here. This is your mind, dreary and bleak isn't it?'

The image of the girl disappeared. Helena scoffed and went to the door, trying to get out once again. She pounded the door, 'Luke Spencer, stop these foolish games now!'

Suddenly images appeared on the window. Stavros was suddenly everywhere, happy, young and handsome. 'Wasn't he happy Helena? Wasn't he handsome?'

Helena looked around at the pictures of her late son. She said loudly once again, let me out of here! Suddenly new pictures flashed throughout the room, it was Stavros still, but this time it was not the face of a happy young man, but a bitter, malicious monster.

Helena put her face in her hands to blot out the images of her beloved son.

'I wonder what happened,' the voice said. 'Oh yes, I remember what happened.'

Helena felt a tap on her shoulder and turned around, shocked to see the girl in the flesh. The girl smiled through the tears in her eyes and said, 'You happened.'

'Monique,' Helena whispered.

\*\*\*Cottage\*\*\*

'What do you mean AJ? I don't really remember our conversation,' Robin said, growing uncomfortable.

'Well, maybe you didn't say it that way, but you definitely expressed doubt about where Michael should be.'

Robin looked at her shoes, the guilt consuming her. She looked back at AJ with a confused look.

AJ sighed and said, 'Did you ever have any reason to believe that Michael may not belong with Jason.'

Robin's mind struggled with itself. The logical part of her screamed to tell AJ the truth and not let this foolishness go any farther, but the deluded part of her, the part that told her she and Jason loved each other said to lie, lie through her teeth, so she did.

'I really don't know what you're talking about AJ. Jason loves Michael, and is the best father for him.'

AJ looked at her and nodded, the hope leaving his eyes once again. They stood there, uncomfortably in the living room of the cottage each accepted a lie.

\*\*\*Upstairs at Luke's\*\*\*

'Where am I?' Helena asked bewildered. The malicious villain was gone and a bewildered old woman remained.

'You tell me,' the apparition said quietly. 'Some deep, dark recess of your mind.'

'You're dead,' Helena whispered.

The ghost scoffed and said raising her eyebrows, 'Mais oui Madame Cassadine. You made sure of it didn't you? With your own two hands I recall.'

'What do you want from me?' Helena hissed, regaining her composure.

'My life, my husband!' the ghost shouted. 'But I'll never get them back. I'll be content with haunting you for the rest of your days,' the ghost reached her hand to Helena's face and said, 'You took my husband, you took my life, but you never even knew about my greatest secret.'

'What do you mean?' Helena said, moving back from the ghost's cold touch.

'Well Madame, if I told you, well then it wouldn't be my secret would it?' the ghost smiled. Starting to back Helena into a corner, saying with passion and malice, 'My secret is safe and living, and you can never find it.' The ghost pulled a knife from under her long skirt. 'Remember this Madame? I do,' the ghost laughed and held the knife to Helena's throat.

'Get away from me Monique, leave me alone,' Helena fumed, her back against the corner of the wall. 'You deserved to die, you stole my son and ruined his future.'

'Shut up you crazy old woman. You can't tell lies to your own demented mind. Stavros was happy,' smoke started to fill the room. The apparition pressed cold lips to Helena's cheek and said, 'I'll see you again soon Mother Cassadine.'

The smoke encircled Helena's head and she drew it into her nose, soon the blackness in the room enveloped her and she passed out onto the floor again.

\*\*\*Downstairs at Luke's\*\*\*

Carly looked up and heard the thump. Then she heard hurried footsteps and she knew it was over and Katie was safe. She breathed deeply and Sonny squeezed her hand. Nikolas looked beyond relieved and gave Lucky a grin. Taggart let out a long breath, relieved that his partner was safe for now. Jason just smiled, as if he knew everything was going to be fine from the start.

'I can go up now,' Carly said and rushed from her seat. Sonny tried to stop her, but soon everyone found themselves going upstairs.

\*\*\*Upstairs\*\*\*

Katie is in the hallway trying desperately to catch her breath. She is in the ghostly outfit, with her hair in the soft waves and curls around her face and down her back. Carly comes running down the hallway, and hugs Katie with unbelievable fierceness. She inspects Katie's hair and says with a laugh, 'The last time I do hair for you Katie-did, what happened to your pretty ringlets?'

'They would be out of character,' Katie said quietly. Looking at the congregation of anxious men that had followed Carly up the stairs. 'Helena will be out for a one and a half hours. We have to get the room back in order and then get out of here, before she wakes up.'

'I still can't believe we pulled it off,' Alexis said happily, hugging Katie, 'You were wonderful.'

'Thanks I think,' Katie smiled, 'I didn't know how much longer I could hold my breath at the end though.'

'You were pretty good for a Cassadine,' Luke sneered and received a glare from everyone assembled in the hallway. 'Geez, tough room.'

Come on kiddies, we have a room to return to normal.'

They worked diligently for the next forty-five minutes, ripping the black paper off of the walls and putting the furniture back in the room. When they had finished they assembled downstairs, Lucky looked and said, 'now what?'

Katie bit her lip and said, 'We wait, Helena will probably go to Florida and look for a child, well me. I left a slight paper trail that will probably take her one month to figure out.'

'What was the point of this game?' Jason gestured to Katie's outfit.

'We had to,' Luke said solemnly. 'Helena is truly scared now, it will give us more freedom.'

'She won't look for anything in Port Charles, she'll panic and head straight to Florida,' Taggart said, understanding everything now.

'Which gives us time to get territory and power from Moreno,' Jason said.

'And plan for our next attack,' Katie finished, she looked at Luke and asked, 'You know what to do?'

'Of course,' Luke said and shooed the entire clan of people out of the club, and went back in his office to prepare for Mama Cass to wake up.

\*\*\*Half and hour later at the penthouse\*\*\*

Carly runs into the penthouse and heads to the nursery, desperate to see Michael. Lucky and Katie have headed over to their own penthouse and Jason and Sonny plop down on the couch.

'You know how to find women of danger don't you Jason?' Sonny laughed.

Jason looks at Sonny with a puzzled expression, then smiles and says, 'I think they know how to find me.'

Sonny's smile fades and is replaced by a serious look. 'So you and Carly, you used toâ€¦you know.'

'Have sex?' Jason says bluntly.

Sonny smiled and said, 'Well, where do you stand now?'

'Stand?'

Sonny was grabbing for words in his mind, he finally said, 'I guess what I'm trying to say is, I like Carly, a lot. And I don't want to step on your toes.'

Jason ponders this and says, 'Carly and I are friends. We always will be. We share Michael. But she knows that I don't want to have sex with her again.'

Sonny raises his eyebrows and says, ''Was it that bad?''

''What? No, sex with Carly was always fun,'' Jason smiled, not seeing the bizarre aspect tot his conversation. ''It's just when Carly and I have sex, our friendship doesn't work. And we both want our friendship to work.''

Sonny nodded thoughtfully, Jason finally said, ''I guess I want to tell you Good Luck, Carly's a handful. But if she loves something, she's worth any trouble she may cause. I couldn't imagine life without Carly's friendship.''

Sonny grinned and said; ''I couldn't either.''

\*\*\*Luke's office\*\*\*

Luke seems to be asleep at his desk. His hand wrapped around a half empty bottle of Jim Bean. Helena walks into his office and slams the door, very loudly. Luke jumps out of his seat and says groggily, ''What the hell?'' he looks at Helena and rubs his eyes, ''it's the woman of my dreams.''

''Very funny Luke,'' Helena says, steam practically coming out of her ears. ''What is the meaning of all this?''

''All what?'' Luke says, as Helena approached his desk.

''What do you think you're doing? Why are you playing these ridiculous games?''

''Are you off your rocker old woman?'' Luke asks, breathing his rancid Jim Bean tainted breath in Helena's face. ''What the hell are talking about? I'm trying to drown my troubles in my buddy Jimmy over there. My life is a hellish ocean right now, and you're just another crazy shark. State your business or leave.''

Helena looks away still dazed from her ''dream''. She had already checked all the rooms upstairs, finding nothing but the normal mediocre rooms that are always there. She is utter confusion and Luke's apparent ignorance is only feeding her need to go look for the past, in Florida. She quickly leaves, giving Luke a hateful look.

After the front door slams shut, he laughs and says, ''Bye bye Helena.''

Coming up:

A celebration

Robin and AJ become better friends

Katie and Jason have an argument

Sonny and Carly discuss ''things''

Lucky gets some advice from Katie

\*\*\*Quartermaine Mansion, 10A.M.\*\*\*

Emily lay on top of her bed, fully clothed. She had been awake for hours now, thinking. Images of Nikolas ran through her mind like wildfire. She swore to herself that she could still feel his heat on her lips.

'God,' she thought, 'what was that? More importantly will it ever happen again?'

She sincerely hoped so. She knew what Nikolas said in the past, that he loved her like a little sister. But that kiss...was definitely not something civilized people do with their sisters. She had to straighten this entire situation out before it got to be too much for her.

But whom could she go to for advice? Her mother was too busy worrying about Alan, and what narcotics he might shove into his body next. She really didn't think Lila would understand. Robin?

'No thank you,' Emily shuddered. 'If I want preaching, I'll go to church.'

Emily thought of Liz, and the last time she saw her. Even if she knew how to get in touch with Liz, it may not be beneficial to talk to a person in Liz's emotional state. Emily sighed and wished Brenda were still alive.

'Carly,' Emily smiled and said aloud. If anyone could help her dissect the opposite sex, it was the resident penthouse sex pot.

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Right now, the sexpot was grumbling down the stairs to see a cheerful and awake Lucky and Katie playing with a rambunctious Michael.

'Good morning sunshine,' Katie laughed. If Carly had been awake a couple more hours, she would have definitely pummeled that chirping little girl.

Carly looked at Lucky groggily and said, 'Did she do this to you? Make you a morning person? Cause I swear if she did, I'll make her pay in the name of Spencers everywhere,' Carly picked up a pillow and aimed it for Katie.

Katie laughed and said, 'Lucky had promised to go running with me this morning, and I made him keep his promise.'

'By jumping on my bed at 7 in the morning,' Lucky groaned.

'Crybaby,' Katie sneered at Lucky and looked up at the stairs to see Jason and Sonny walking down in their business suits. 'And where do you think you guys are going?'

'Business meeting,' Sonny said as Jason picked up Michael and said Good morning.

'Really?' Katie arched her eyebrows. 'Is Taggart going to be with you?'

Sonny gave Katie and incredulous look and said, ''No Miss Thomas, I don't think it would be a good idea to have the PCPD tag along.''

Katie sneered and said, ''Which proves my next point, when exactly where you going to tell me?''

''Why?'' Jason said putting the energetic Michael back on the floor and placing his hands on his hips.

Katie mimicked Jason's movements and expression, which made Carly laugh into her pillow. ''I don't know Morgan, maybe cause this isn't only some little mob game you guys can play by yourselves. This is WSB business as well.''

''You don't need to come along, it's dangerous,'' Jason stated flatly, sitting down at the table and examining the papers there, meaning that the conversation was over.

Katie scoffed and gave an indignant look to Sonny, who backed away with his hands in a surrender gesture. No way was he getting involved in this argument. Katie walked purposefully over to Jason's seat and placed her hands over the papers he was reading.

''Excuse me, Morgan,'' Katie seethed. ''It's dangerous? Believe it or not WSB training does acquaint the agent with elements of danger. Gas Rooms, burning houses, SHOOTOUTS. I don't really think Port Charles' excuse for a mob can top that.''

''Thomas, you concentrate on your job with Helena,'' Jason said, anger creasing his brow. His next sentence is loud and the veins on his forehead are popping out, ''AND LET ME DO MY JOB.''

''Well I hate to inform you Morgan,'' Katie said, falling into a cool, knowing glare, ''My job isn't only neutralizing Helena. Most of my job is eliminating the sudden influx of drugs into Port Charles. And unfortunately it means putting you back in charge of the mob. Now, either you cooperate with me, or I call Taggart and you can try to cooperate with him. It's your decision. But I am not letting your machismo get into the way of this case.''

Jason looked at Katie, calming down from his burst of anger. He never really considered the fact that Katie would be involved in his business. It made him really uncomfortable. He didn't want Katie to get hurt, not only would Carly have his hide, but he would be upset himself if anything happened to Katie.

Sonny interrupted this glare fest, hoping that both of them had calmed down and offered, ''I think Katie belongs with us. She has a better cover than Taggart. And besides,'' he adds sheepishly, ''I do not feel like working so closely with Mr. Clean so early in the morning.''

A different smile came onto Katie's face, a victorious one and she said, ''Give me ten minutes and you can brief me in the car.''

Once Katie bounded up the stairs, Lucky went over to the defeated Jason and patted his shoulder, ''It's okay Jason,'' Lucky grinned, ''She made me run three miles this morning.''



\*\*\*Alexis' apartment\*\*\*

Alexis looked at her watch, 'Taggart should be here,' she thought grimly. They were supposed to meet today to review Cassadine things, and figure out Helena's motive in joining the mob circle.

A knock on the door sent Alexis bounding over to the door, she swung it open and said, 'It's about time you got here.'

Ned smiled from the other side of the door, 'I didn't know you were expecting me,' he flashed a brilliant smile.

'Truthfully,' Alexis said, trying to hide her disappointment. 'I wasn't. I thought you would still be with Ms. Ardanowski.'

The last comment made Ned blush. He had spent all of last night's party with V, and many glasses of champagne. He hid his embarrassment and shot back, 'well you seemed kind of preoccupied with Luke.'

Alexis did not blush, she knew what she had done last night. She said honestly, 'I'm expecting a colleague any minute now, I really don't have time for games Ned.'

He reached out and brushed his hand to her face, smiling softly and said, 'I've missed you Alexis.' He plants a soft kiss on her lips, then deepens it with passion.

Taggart approaches the front door to see the embrace, and he can't help but not like it one bit. He clears his throat and Ned and Alexis jump apart like two teenagers on their parents couch. Ned looks confused at Taggart, who for some strange reason brought flowers and breakfast.

Ned coughs and looks at Alexis curiously, 'Your colleague?'

Alexis looks down at her shoes, nods before saying confidently, 'Yes, Detective Taggart and I are working on a case. Thanks for stopping by Ned, I'll see you later.'

With that, Alexis pushes a surprised Ned out of the door. And looks indignantly at Taggart.

Taggart smiles and hands her the flowers, 'What can I say, I have perfect timing.'

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Lucky is sitting on the couch with Michael, watching the television. Lucky scratches his head and says, 'I don't know Michael. Telewhatties? They don't make much sense to me.'

Michael smiles and bounces up and down on Lucky's lap, babbling and making noises that seemed more discernable to Lucky than those overgrown colored freaks on the television. Emily walks in and smiles at the adorable sight and says, 'You guys are absolutely adorable.'

'Thanks,' Lucky says, lifting Michael into the air cooing, 'We know how cute we are right Mikey?'

Emily looks around and shifts uncomfortably, she says quietly 'Is Carly around?'

Lucky looks quizically at his friend and nods, 'She's in the shower, well she has been for like an hour. She should be done soon. Anything I can do for you?'

'No, I really need to talk to Carly about something personal.'

Lucky wonders what could be so important that Emily couldn't talk to him about it. They were best friends afterall. His thoughts are interrupted by Carly coming down the steps saying, 'Hey Em, what's up?'

Lucky looks down at Michael as the two women go upstairs to talk and says, 'I don't understand women Michael.'

\*\*\*Limo\*\*\*

Katie smiled at the two men sitting across from her, she said cheerfully, 'That wasn't so bad now was it?'

Sonny smiled at her and nodded, 'It went really well.'

'So well,' Katie said slyly, 'we deserve a celebration.'

Jason looked at Katie, trying to decide if she was still mad at him. He offered, 'We'll go to Luke's and pick a few bottles up.'

Katie smiled at him, and said, 'Cool, I could really use a little pick me up. Helena's yacht is on it's way to Florida, and she probably won't return for a whole month.'

'It's definitely a cause for celebration,' Sonny said and tapped on the window to tell the driver to stop at Luke's.

Jason gave Katie a slight smile and said, 'I'm sorry.'

Katie looked at Jason in shock and he continued, 'I didn't mean to step on your toes Thomas, I was being a kind of jerk.'

'It's okay Morgan,' she laid a friendly punch on his knee, 'You were being a protective jerk, and that was kind of sweet.'

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Carly looked at Emily who had just spilled her guts and said, 'He hasn't said a word to you since?'

'No, we danced at the party last night, but he was kind of detached and I didn't really want to bring it up.'

Carly bit her lip thoughtfully and offered Emily, 'I think it's mostly because he's confused. A lot of things are happening in his life right now. He can see you as more than a friend, but only when

his defenses aren't up.'

'Defenses?' Emily asked, trusting every word Carly uttered.

'Well, a guy says one thing to you, I love yo like a little sister. And then he may be wrong. And the truth only comes out momentarily, like a veil being lifted. And now he's back to having the veil in place,' Carly said trying to console the girl she added, 'It's only a matter of time before it drops completely, Em.'

'What if it always stays in the same position?' Emily asked in despair.

'Look at you Emily!' Carly laughed, 'You're beautiful, intelligent, absolutely amazing. He's fallen for you a thousand time already, he just doesn't know it yet.'

'Thanks Carly,' Emily said shyly.

'Thank you,' Carly smiled genuinely. 'I'm happy you came to me for advice.'

\*\*\*Cottage, 3 PM\*\*\*

AJ knocks lightly on the door, hoping that Robin was home. She opened the door to see him standing there, with a bunch of pretty flowers, she smiled.

AJ sheepishly said, 'I'm sorry, for asking stupid questions. Would you like to go to dinner with me?'

Robin looked into the house. She had been planning to spend the night with Hagen Daaz and 'It's a Wonderful life' but she decided against it.

She smiled at AJ and said, 'Can you give me a half hour?'

\*\*\*Penthouse, later that evening\*\*\*

Somehow this had happened again, Jason looked around the room. Suddenly the penthouse was the meeting place of the strangest combination of people in Port Charles. Katie, Carly and Sonny were spooning out Chinese takeout onto paper plates. Lucky and Emily were entertaining Michael. Alexis and Taggart were bantering with each other on the couch. Nikolas had just walked in and Jason mentally threw his arms up in lamentation. He remembered the days when it was just him in the penthouse. He smiled, he liked this much better.

Carly returns from the kitchen with many bottles of beer and a bottle of vodka. Jason wrinkles his nose and says, 'Vodka?'

Katie grins sheepishly and says, 'It's for me. I hate beer.'

'Well I like it,' Lucky said grabbing one from his cousin.

'I don't know Lucky,' Katie said, 'You're kind of young for

alcohol.'

'Look who is talking miss 19 year old,' Taggert snorts.

'Let the kid enjoy himself,' Sonny said and looked sternly at Lucky, 'Your old man lets you do this right?'

'Sure,' Lucky lied and opened the bottle of beer, sipping the rancid stuff.

'If you puke in our penthouse,' Katie warns, 'I am not cleaning it up.'

Lucky opened the beer and drank a long swig. When he was done, his face screwed up and he positively turned green. He put the beer down and said, 'never mind.'

'That's okay Lucky,' Katie smiled, 'we bought something that tastes much better, and it's non-alcoholic.'

Sonny sniffed and said, 'Girly drinks.'

Carly hit his arm and said, 'Girly drinks are fine. That's what I'm drinking tonight.'

Jason smirked and said, 'What no alcohol for Carly?'

Carly sneered and said, 'Latecia has the night off, someone has to be responsible for Michael's sake.'

'And you've volunteered?' Sonny asks sarcastically.

'You can just shut your mouth,' Carly held her hand over his mouth playfully. 'I can be very responsible.'

Taggert grabbed two beers and twisted the caps off of them, he brought them over to Alexis' corner of the room. He grinned handing one to her and said 'Drink up Counselor Lexie.'

Alexis looked at the beer, wondering if this was the right thing to do. Taggert sensed her uneasiness and drawled, 'What's the matter Alexis, afraid to lose control.'

Alexis looked up at Taggert, who was standing there in all of his arrogant, bald glory. There was something else there too. Taggert hadn't sipped his drink yet, something in his eyes said he was afraid to lose control too. Alexis stood up, clinked her bottle on top of his, causing the beverage to foam up and spill onto his hand. Taggert started to drink not wanting to make a mess. Alexis joined him, when they had finished half of their bottles were empty.

Taggert smiled and said, 'Nice trick, Lexie.'

'Law School,' Alexis grinned.

After Carly brought out the 'Girly drinks', non-alcoholic, brightly colored slushy things, it seemed the only people drinking were Katie, Jason, Taggert and Alexis. But the four of them were doing an excellent job letting go off their inhibitions very quickly. She watched Katie closely though, as she always did when Katie partook of

the alcoholic refreshments.

Katie was a sweet girl, Carly knew that better than anyone. But she had the tendency to really let loose. She was holding so many emotions inside. Carly smiled, well she did herself too, but at least she let the pent up emotions explode once and a while. Katie miraculously found new places to put her emotions, never really exploding. But when Katie drank, look out. She didn't explode, she just became this little hummingbird. Socializing, saying things she really shouldn't, very easy to take advantage of.

Carly watched as Katie dared Jason to a six shooter. Jason didn't really know what it was. So Katie went and got two medium size cups and measured six shots of vodka into each of them.

'Now,' Katie grinned, her face flushed. 'we drink them.'

'Are you kidding,' Jason said, sipping on his beer. 'That's insane.'

'Putting toxins into your body is insane,' Katie said, pointing to the beer. 'And if you're going to do something, so it right.'

And with that, Katie threw back the cup of vodka, the putrid liquid burning her throat and sending her stomach into somersaults. She reminded herself not to do that for a couple of months at least. But the effects rushed to her brain almost immediately, making the memory of Helena blurry and the month long vacation away from Helena stretch into a life time.

Jason shook his head, and said, 'No thanks, I'll stick to beer.'

Katie wrinkled her nose in disgust and started to babble, 'Ugh, beer. The whole point of drinking alcohol is to momentarily forget your troubles, get drunk beyond the point of EVER wanting to get drunk again. And beer is pukey tasting, if you want to get drunk, get drunk quick and drink as little nasty stuff as possible, that's my theory and besides are you going to let a girl beat you?'

Sonny laughed and said, 'Nice ranting Kate.'

Lucky shook his head and said, 'Talk about peer pressure.'

Carly looked at Katie and put the bottle away, knowing that she had had enough. But Jason's cup of vodka was still on the table. And if Carly knew her Katie, the cup would be empty soon enough. She looked at Jason who was refusing Katie's funny little challenges and wondered if Jason really ever was drunk.

Carly smiled and finally said, 'Come on Jase, forget the world for a couple of hours. Besides if Katie beats you, she'll never let you live it down.'

Taggert yelled across the room to Jason, 'Just drink it Anger boy, what kind of a woman are you?' Alexis, who was already quite loose started to giggle.

Jason rolled his eyes, picked up the cup and swallowed the poison, he immediately regretted it and said to Katie, 'You like this stuff

more than beer? It's disgusting!''

Lucky told them all to hush, ''It's Terminator Two!''

''Oh, Lucky that's such a horrible movie,'' Emily giggled, finally glad that the bottle of vodka was put away. It was kind of weird being around drinkers.

''Come on, it's Arnold.''

Nikolas looked curiously at the TV screen and pondered aloud, ''Arnold?''

''You don't know man?'' Lucky said in wonder. ''You know the big guy in all the cheezy movies, he's a cultural icon for god's sakes. Ok just watch.''

So they all watched, Carly put Michael to bed and came downstairs in time to see the Naked Arnold scene, she laughed and shouted, ''Woohoo Arnold, show of that butt of yours!''

Sonny glared and said, ''Excuse me Miss Pervert, I am trying to watch Arnold!''

''Aww come on, you're jealous cause Arnold has a nicer butt than you do.''

Sonny looked at her with mock indignation, he turns to Jason and whimpers, ''I have a nice butt don't I?''

''Oh shut up,'' Jason smiled.

''You have a great butt Corinthos!'' Taggert whistled. ''Alexis said so!''

Alexis looked at Taggert and smacked him with the pillow, ''I did not!''

Lucky turned around about to yell at everyone for interrupting Arnold when he saw the perfect opportunity, he grabbed a pillow and slammed Nikolas over the head with it. Nikolas looked up, confused and saw Emily bring her pillow down on Lucky. Soon it was a full fledged pillow war, Blondes versus Brunettes, with the bald guy in the middle, literally. Taggert was throwing pillows in both directions like a wild man, obviously enjoying himself.

Sonny and the rest of the dark haired patrol planned an ambush on Carly, Jason, Lucky and just for fun Taggert. They rushed over to the other side of the room and started swinging. Katie didn't have a pillow so she chose to tackle the first person she came to, Jason.

Jason fell back on the couch and Katie landed on top of him. She looked at him for a minute, letting herself get lost in those blue eyes and finally stammered, ''You know what, I uhm I think I'm hungry, I'm going to the kitchen.''

Katie walked out of the room into the kitchen, stepping on the remote, which switched to MTV. The sounds of Jennifer Paige's ''Crush'' filled the penthouse.

I see ya blowin' me a kiss  
It doesn't take a scientist  
To understand what's going on baby  
If you see something in my eye  
Let's not over analyze  
Don't go too deep with it baby

Jason stood up looking, as usual confused. He looked at the group of people in the penthouse. They seemed to have split up into pairs of battlers, except for Lucky who had plopped onto the couch in exhaustion.

So let it be what it'll be  
Don't make a fuss and get crazy over you and me  
Here's what I'll do  
I'll play loose  
Run like we have a day with destiny

Sonny and Carly were wrestling on the floor, Carly was winning or at least Sonny was letting her win. Suddenly Sonny got up with Carly on his lap and kissed her. A kiss that took Carly by surprise, but she was obviously enjoying it.

It's just a little crush (crush)  
Not like I faint every time we touch  
It's just some little thing (crush)  
Not like everything I do depends on you  
Sha-la-la-la, Sha-la-la-la  
It's raising my adrenaline  
You're banging on a heart of tin  
Please don't make too much of it baby  
You say the word ''forevermore''  
That's not what I'm looking for  
All I can commit to is ''maybe''

Jason looked at his sister, who was being chased by Nikolas with a pillow, he finally cornered her and they looked at each other intensely. Emily thought she saw something uncloud in Nikolas' eyes as he looked at her. She prepared herself for another kiss, licking her lips slightly. Nikolas suddenly backed away, remembering whom he

had cornered and sheepishly pointed to Lucky. Emily nodded and they ran to attack the peaceful Lucky.

So let it be what it'll be

Don't make a fuss and get crazy over you and me

Here's what I'll do

I'll play loose

Run like we have a day with destiny

When Jason's look strayed to the corner Alexis and Taggart where in he quickly looked away. They were in a passionate, if not a little drunken embrace. Taggart's hands were running through Alexis' dark hair. And Alexis seemed to be thoroughly enjoying herself, even if she wasn't really being herself.

It's just a little crush (crush)

Not like I faint every time we touch

It's just some little thing (crush)

Not like everything I do depends on you

Sha-la-la-la, Sha-la-la-la

Jason walked into the kitchen, to see Katie opening and closing kitchen cabinets nervously. She looked up and plastered a smile on her face. 'Hi,' she said cheerfully.

Jason didn't really say anything, he walked over to her, the alcohol blotting out Robin, AJ, Moreno, everything but Katie. Her beautiful black hair framing her face. Her light brown eyes filled with kindness, sincerity and fire. He looked at her lips, as if for the very first time. They were pouty, and her top lip had this dent in the middle that made them look entirely kissable.

Vanilla skies (vanilla skies)

White picket fences in your eyes

A vision of you and me

Katie looked up at Jason, not knowing at all what he was thinking, she subconsciously licked her lips, and tucked her hair behind her ears nervously. Suddenly Jason's lips were on hers in a kiss like no other she had ever experienced. It did things to her head that even alcohol couldn't do. She found her hands moving to his face and up into his hair, wanting this to never end.

His arms went around her waist drawing her body closer to his. He could feel her heart beating; it was fast almost as fast as his own heart was racing. He didn't even notice that Katie had stopped running her hands through his hair, she had begun to push at his broad chest, pushing herself away.

It's just a little crush (crush)



Not like I faint every time we touch

It's just some little thing (crush)

Not like everything I do depends on you

Sha-la-la-la

Not like I faint every time we touch

She looked at him angrily once they broke their passionate kiss,  
'Why did you just do that?'

Jason looked at her, his bewildered face turning red; 'I just wanted to, I thought you wanted to.'

'I don't want to make a habit of kissing the men my best friend has slept with,' Katie stepped back from Jason, confusion written all over her face. 'Just don't do it again.'

It's just some little thing

Not like everything I do depends on you

Sha-la-la-la

Not like I faint every time we touch

It's just some little thing

Not like everything I do

Jason looked at her as if she were crazy. Right now he couldn't stop thinking about doing it again. She walked quickly out of the kitchen into the riotous atmosphere of the living room. She took the remote and turned off the TV, throwing the remote back down on the table with a crash.

The room was suddenly filled with silence after the crash. They looked at Katie, their expressions sobering up. Jason walked into the room with an unreadable expression. She looked around, never feeling more uncomfortable than she did now.

'I never liked that song,' Katie said quietly, turning around and heading to her penthouse, leaving the whole group stunned at her rapid change of mood.

Coming up:

Lucky gets some advice from Katie

Danger strikes Port Charles

Robin and AJ make a decision

Emily and Nikolas talk

This was pretty fast. I hope you guys enjoy it! Replies are more than welcome!

Thanks,

KimLee

## Chapter 15

\*\*\*Penthouse living room\*\*\*

Everyone looks uncomfortably at the door Katie has just rushed out of and then back to the door she had come from and saw an uncomfortable, red faced Jason.

Sonny was the first to break the silence he looked at Jason reprovingly and said, ''You didn't yell at her again did you?''

''You yelled at her?'' Nikolas demanded.

Lucky shook his head and said, ''Geez Jason, she was almost crying,'' he turned to Nikolas and Emily and said, ''He yelled at her this morning.''

''Good job Morgan,'' Taggert muttered angrily. He took a protective stance and said, ''You had better hope that she's okay. You'll not only have to deal with her, you'll have to deal with me.''

Jason tried to speak but as he opened his mouth he was interrupted.

Alexis shook her head in disgust at Jason and said, ''Maybe we should go see if she's all right.''

''Jason why would you yell at her,'' Emily said, her eyebrows crinkled in confusion, ''everyone was having a good time.''

''But I,'' Jason began in earnest, only to be cut off by Nikolas.

''If I ever catch you yelling at her, especially if you make her cry, I swear,'' Nikolas began approaching Jason menacingly.

''ENOUGH!'' Carly yelled. She had stayed quiet all this time, studying Jason's face. She knew he hadn't yelled at Katie. ''Jason didn't yell at her. It was something else.''

Lucky, who had slipped close to the door, walked quietly out of the penthouse. He was going to see for himself.

''Well what else could have gotten her so upset?'' Sonny asked, trying not to let Carly's protectiveness of Jason get to him. He couldn't help but wonder if she would do the same for him.

Carly shrugged, knowing what got Katie so upset. Katie liked Jason, and Jason had probably turned her down because he was still hung up on Robin. 'Damn that little sprite Robin,' Carly thought to herself. 'Katie and Jason would look so cute together.' She said aloud however, ''I don't know, Maybe that vodka she had, Katie tends to get emotional.''

Taggert wasn't quite satisfied and neither was Nikolas. Taggert rubbed his head and said, 'Still he did yell at her this morning, and don't worry Angerboy, I won't forget that.'

'Really Jason,' Emily said, 'You should learn to control your temper.'

Suddenly Jason let out a noise that sounded like it was halfway between a groan and a scream. 'When you people are done judging me in my own home, please leave. I'm going up to check on Michael.'

He left the group of people in the living room, wondering what they had said. Carly knew though and followed him up to the nursery. A slightly jealous Sonny noted her absence.

\*\*\*Across the hall\*\*\*

Katie is sitting on the couch, crying. She had wanted Jason to kiss her, she liked it. But she wasn't going to hurt Caroline for some guy. Some guy with fabulous blue eyes, a completely loving heart and a fabulous kissable mouth. Nope, she didn't need Jason Morgan. Besides, he was on the rebound. She wished she hadn't taken so many shots of vodka, she might be able to think clearer.

Lucky walks in and Katie straightens up and wiped the tears from under her eyes she laughed and said, 'How embarrassing.'

'Are you really okay?' Lucky said, sitting down next to her.

Katie sat on her legs Indian style on the couch and giggled nervously. 'Of course. Wished I hadn't drunk so much alcohol, but I'm fine.'

'Did Jason do anything to make you upset?' Lucky asked sincerely.

'Oh god,' Katie thought. 'Just what I need a heart to heart with the son of my father's murderer.' She swallowed that thought however and told herself that the father and the son are not the same person. She shook her head no; 'I just get over emotional when I've had too much to drink. I'll be fine really.'

'Okay,' Lucky said, looking at his hands. Somehow he wished something was wrong, that Jason had done something. So Lucky could ride up and save the damsel in distress, like he had done with Elizabeth.

'Did you ever feel like life takes things from you to see how much you can hurt?' Katie asked, not only thinking of Jason, but of everything, her mother and father, her happiness.

Lucky scoffed and said, 'All the time.'

Katie looked up curiously at Lucky. How could Lucky Spencer's life be so horrible? He had a loving father and mother, who loved each other no matter what state their marriage, was in. He had a loving relationship with his sister and as far as Katie could tell Nikolas.

'I mean,' Lucky said looking at Katie with an angry face, 'You're an agent right? You must have access to all kinds of files on my Dad. Hero right?'

'An impulsive non traditional one,' Katie offered solemnly.

'Yea, well so non-traditional that he raped my mother.'

'So that was it,' Katie thought. 'Lucky had found out about his father and his mother.'

'Lucky,' Katie began quietly. 'This is absolutely none of my business. So I assume you're telling me this because you consider me a friend. So as a friend I'm telling you, that a rape is not your business either. It's your mother's and your father's. Don't get me wrong, you can be angry and you can hate them. You just can't change it. So, I guess what I'm trying to say is, learn from the past, and don't let it haunt you, especially since it's not your past. If any of that made any sense.'

Lucky looked down at his hands and finally said, 'It makes sense, it's just hard to pound into my head. Someone else told me something like that once. I should listen to you both.'

Katie put her hand on top of Lucky's and he grasped it tightly. Katie said with a small smile, 'Lucky, I don't think the Cassadine Spencer war extends to us, and I'm happy to consider you my friend. I don't really want to know why you're not living with your parents. I don't really care. But I just want you to know that this will always be a home for you.'

Lucky smiled at Katie's dramatics. He laughed and said, 'You're still drunk.'

'Well drunks tell the truth,' Katie laughed. Her face turned solemn and she asked suddenly, 'So who was she?'

Lucky's heart skipped a beat; he smiled and said 'Elizabeth. You met her the other night, she was the one with the cut on her arm.'

'Where is she now?' Katie asked politely.

'Home, in Colorado.' Lucky said, tears coming to his eyes. 'She was so full of life, you would have liked her. But when she left, she was catatonic. It broke my heart.'

Katie pursed her lips thoughtfully and finally offered, 'You know, I grew up in Florida, and I was constantly haunted by this horrible thing that had happened. This fear followed me, it was in me. I spent ten years there. My only saving grace being Caroline. And now I'm here, and it's hard to explain. But these people,' she squeezed Lucky's hand, 'my friends, this new place, it's making the fear easier to live with. I think Elizabeth needs to get better.'

'That's what I keep telling myself,' Lucky smiled, 'and I need to learn to live without her.'

'Well not entirely without her,' Katie jumped up and dumped a packed box on the table; she rummaged through it and pulled out a pen and paper. 'Write her, tell her that she has people that love her here, and tell her that you understand.'

Lucky smiled and took the pen and paper. He grabbed Katie in a fierce hug and said, 'Thanks Katie,' she started to walk towards the door to leave and give Lucky privacy. Lucky called out, 'Kate?'

'Yea?' Katie turned around with a smile.

Lucky looked at her with a friendly smile and said, 'I hope that life finally lets you have what you want.'

'I wish Lucky.'

\*\*\*Penthouse Nursery\*\*\*

Jason is sitting watching Michael sleep. He tucks the covers around his little body and adjusts the stuffed animals around the bed. He turned to see Carly standing behind him. She smiled down at Michael and says, 'He's perfect, isn't he?'

Jason nods and says, 'Thanks for defending me downstairs.'

'Hey, you would have done the same for me right?' Carly says, crossing her arms over her chest. 'So Jason, what are your intentions towards my Katie?'

'Excuse me?' Jason asks in surprise.

'You love Robin,' Carly's sneer was soon wiped away by the hurt look that filled Jason's face. 'Come on Jase, you spouted that like a broken record for how long. And know you and Katie seem to be getting close. I don't need her to get hurt. It hurts me to see her in pain.'

'Robin wasn't the person I thought she was,' Jason said quietly.

'But you are still in love with the person you thought she was,' Carly said sternly. 'And Katie does not need to be a rebound case. Especially for you, you are entirely too irresistible for your own good.'

'Look Carly,' Jason said, getting very sleepy from the alcohol. 'If what you want to know is if I like Katie, I do. But I don't think she likes me very much.'

And with that, he walked out, leaving a confused Carly standing in the nursery.

\*\*\*Sonny's room\*\*\*

Sonny is struggling through the storm again. Just when he feels like he's going to fall back again a hand grabs his. He looks up to see golden hair and a bright grin in the stormy darkness. They start to make it past the storm, when suddenly the hand he's holding let's go

and walks into the peace with another man.

Sonny falls back into the storm screaming NO and suddenly he's on that golden beach again.

Brenda helps him off of the sand and laughs, ''You think she can help you? Dream on Sonny.''

''Brenda, '' Sonny mutters, rolling his eyes.

''Do you like being in strange triangles Sonny? You don't seem to be the victor with them though, '' Brenda smiles smugly.

''Ouch, '' Sonny says, holding his heart in mock pain. ''Carly will help me, she and Jason aren't together like that.''

''How would you know?'' Brenda laughs.

''Because I just do Bren, '' Sonny yells. He runs his hands through his hair and says, ''Why can't you let me live my life.''

''Because you belong here with me Sonny, '' Brenda says rubbing Sonny's shoulders. Getting no response from him she turns him to see her angry face. ''You are the reason why I'm here.''

''No Brenda, '' Sonny says shaking his head. ''That was Goldenboy, not me.''

''We belong together, here in this paradise, '' Brenda says touching Sonny's face lightly. ''Stay with me.''

''No, '' Sonny mutters, and suddenly another hand touches his cheek. He looks up to see Brenda gone, and Carly sitting next to him on his bed.

''You were having a nightmare, '' Carly said softly.

''It's over now though, right?'' Sonny smiled softly. Carly nodded and kissed his forehead. He wrapped his arms around her and they lay on the bed together. Letting sleep overtake each other, holding on to each other like there would be no tomorrow.

\*\*\*Nursery\*\*\*

Katie slips in to see Michael standing up in his crib, looking like he was about to cry. Katie rushed to him and picked him up. ''It's okay Michael, don't start to cry.''

The baby placed his head on Katie's shoulder, calmed by her presence. Katie whispered, ''You know where your Mom is? I can't find her and I need to talk to her. Your dad. He's a pretty cool guy you know. Yea I bet you know.''

In his room Jason picks up the baby monitor and innocently listens to Katie's one sided conversation with Michael.

''So what do you think of all of these people in the house all of a sudden. Bet it's much nicer than that Robin girl is. Right?'' Michael smiled and Katie said, ''What are you doing up so late anyway little boy? You should be asleep. You need a lullaby. Let's see lullaby,

'Rock-a-by baby'? Too morbid. 'Itsy Bitsy spider'? Too cheerfulâ€|oh wait I know.'

Jason smiled at Michael's cooing and he could picture Michael grabbing at Katie's hair, suddenly Katie's sweet voice filled the nursery and the baby monitor.

'Try not to get worried

Try not to turn on to problems that upset you oh,

Don't you know everything's all right yes everything's fine

And we want you to sleep well tonight

Let the world turn without you tonight''

In Sonny's room Sonny is sleeping peacefully and Carly is looking at him thoughtfully. She gently places a misplaced lock of hair back on his head. She smiles and cuddles closer to him.

'Close your eyes, close your eyes and relax

Think of nothing tonight''

Lucky is still in the other penthouse thinking. He thinks of Elizabeth, being really truly happy again, and living without fear. He smiles and picks up the pen and paper and starts to write, 'Dear Elizabeth, I love you.'

'Sleep and I shall soothe you,

Calm you and anoint you

Myrrh for your hot forehead oh

Don't you know everything's all right yes everything's fine

And it's cool and the water's sweet

For the fire in your head and feet.'

Alexis and Taggart are outside of her apartment. He gives her one last look and kisses her forehead gently. She smiles and goes into her apartment, waving Taggart goodbye. She ignores the ringing phone and decides to live in this drunken world of ridiculous happiness for one night.

On the other end of the line, Ned angrily hangs up. Emily is upstairs looking at a picture of herself, Lucky, Elizabeth and Nikolas. She looks at it and bites her lip, determined to let Nikolas find things on his own. Things would eventually work out. She could feel it as she lay down on her bed, dreaming of the day Nikolas would finally see everything clearly.

'Close your eyes

Close your eyes and relax think of nothing tonight.'

Robin is in her cottage alone. She can't help but think of Jason and

how just a few nights ago they were sleeping in this bed together. And for some reason AJ popped into her head, she quickly put away thoughts of AJ and concentrated on the day she and Jason would get back together.

Jason smiles as he puts down the baby monitor and gets into bed. He'd talk to Katie tomorrow. Everything would work out.

'Close your eyes

Close your eyes and relax think of nothing tonight.'

Coming up:

A disaster hits Port Charles

Carly returns to Shadybrooke

Alexis and Taggart misunderstand each other

Emily and Nikolas talk

Lucky sticks his nose where it doesn't belong, setting Katie and Jason against each other

Chapter 16

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

It was already Sunday night. Carly, Katie, Bobbie and Emily had spent a peaceful day Christmas shopping. Katie had managed to avoid Carly's questioning glance all day. Jason had been dragged into going to Luke's to watch football games all day, so he couldn't ask Katie any questions either.

Jason was sitting on the couch now, as Carly came into the penthouse followed by Reynaldo, who was carrying dozens of shopping bags.

'Hey you,' Carly said cheerfully.

'Hey,' Jason said, smiling at the multitude of bags.

Simultaneously Jason asked, 'Where's Katie?' and Carly asked 'Where's Sonny?'

Carly laughed and said, 'She's over helping Lucky with his Calculus or something. She's pretty tired.'

Jason couldn't hide his disappointment, he said quietly, 'She's had a pretty long week,' he ran his hand through his hair and got up from the couch. 'I have too, so I'm going to sleep, there are important things that need to be done tomorrow. Uhh, Sonny's in the kitchen, he's making you dinner I think.'

Carly raised her eyebrows in an 'Oh really?' expression. Her face suddenly serious as she remembered to tell Jason something, 'By the way, tomorrow is visiting day at Shadybrooke.'



Jason gave her a confused look and said, ''I didn't realize you had made many friends there, that you would actually want to visit.''

''No, there's a couple of women there, actually one in particular. She's the ex-wife of one of Moreno's men or something. She used to talk to me all the time, mostly because she thought I was catatonic. But, she would talk about her ex-husband all of the time.''

''Carly,'' Jason began, putting on that poker face expression. ''I really don't think that's a good idea.''

Carly put her hands on her hips, bracing for a fight. ''I'm not asking your for your opinion or permission Jase. I'm informing you of where I'm going to be tomorrow.''

Jason scrutinized Carly's stance, she was definitely in the attack position. He rubbed his temples. He didn't have the energy to fight it out tonight. He smiled and said, ''Don't do anything stupid and take Reynaldo with you.''

Carly smiled and rushed over to hug her friend good night. She kissed his cheek and said, ''Love you Jase.''

''Yea, yea,'' he smiled and headed up the stairs. ''Good night.''

Carly's nose picked up the scent of tomatoes and pasta. She smiled when she remembered Sonny was making her dinner. Her, not a group of people, not her and Jason, just her. Her relationship with Sonny had been developing so fast, that she didn't really get a chance to doubt it yet. She knew what it was based on, two people needing each other. Not sex or delusion, just two people wanting to feel each other against them. The thought of Sonny's arms around her sent Carly practically running into the kitchen.

\*\*\*Penthouse Two\*\*\*

''So,'' Katie said picking up the pencil and writing as she talked. ''You take the limit as  $n$  approaches infinity and then you have your area.''

Lucky groaned, ''There's got to be an easier way to do this!''

Katie smiled wickedly, ''There is,'' Lucky's face brightened. ''But you have to learn this way first. And then you learn the easier way.''

Lucky plunked his head down on the table with a bang. His voice shook the table as he said, ''That makes no sense. Calculus makes no sense. I mean take infinity, it's not real, you can never get to it, how in the world can you approach something that doesn't exist? Calculus is a total waste of time.''

''Life makes no sense Lucky,'' Katie said, rubbing her eyes sleepily. ''Does that it's a total waste of time?''

Lucky gave Katie a snide look and said, ''You look tired. You know, I

don't have school tomorrow so we have time to work on this.'

'WE?' Katie joked. 'You, I went through Calculus already and I don't think you're really paying me.'

'You have my eternal gratitude,' Lucky said with a straight face.

Katie thought about it briefly and said, 'I'll settle for you running with me tomorrow.'

Lucky groaned and rolled his eyes, 'Three miles at seven in the morning?'

Katie nodded gleefully, 'Yup, Come on, go to sleep. I have a huge day tomorrow.'

'How huge?'

'Nosy,' Katie smiled. 'I'm going to watch a meeting with Jason and Sonny tomorrow, to make sure things don't go wrong.'

'Can I come?' Lucky's plea was met with a 'Yeah right' look from Katie. Lucky persisted however, 'Come on. I'm good at undercover, I ran from the mob most of my life. Besides it would be cool to be a secret agent man.'

It could have been the fact that she was tired, it could have been stress. And it definitely could have been the fact that Katie had been in Lucky's position just three years ago, begging to be a part of the WSB. She shrugged vaguely and said. 'It's on the docks, around Lombard street. If I don't see you, that means that you aren't there. Don't do anything stupid Lucky.'

'A Spencer? Do something stupid?' Lucky deadpanned.

\*\*\*Quartermaine Mansion\*\*\*

Emily picked up her phone and began to dial Wyndemere. She had been agonizing this for hours. He was one of her best friends, it was entirely natural for her to be calling. But she had still agonized over the decision for hours. She heard the phone pick up and was relieved when she heard Nikolas' clear, confident voice on the other end.

'Hi Nikolas,' Emily began, her cheeks growing hot. 'It's Emily.'

'Hi,' Nikolas said, trying not to acknowledge the quiver in his voice. This was Emily for God's sakes, they had spent hours talking on the phone before. 'Is there something wrong?'

'No, nothing. I just wanted,' Emily's voice faltered, 'Wanted to hear your voice.'

'Oh God,' she thought, 'I wasn't supposed to say that. Idiot, idiot, idiot. Please don't freak out Nikolas, please don't freak out.'

'I'm glad to hear your voice too Emily,' Nikolas said softly, before he realized what he was saying.

There was a comfortable silence on the line, as if they were both digesting what the other had said. Emily finally sputtered out, 'So, I don't have school tomorrow, would you like to meet for brunch or something?'

'That would be great,' Nikolas gushed, feeling kind of disappointed at the change in subject matter. 'I'll meet you at the launch at 11 OK?'

'Sure, 11, see you then Nikolas,' Emily said happily. 'bye.'

'Bye Em,' Nikolas said, unknowingly adding on the very natural sounding, 'Love you.'

'Love you too,' Emily added without a second thought.

They both hung up and proceeded to go into convulsions.

'I didn't just say that,' Nikolas thought. 'I couldn't have. I did. I meant it. I love Emily, she's my best friend. This can't be right. She'll be so disgusted. She must hate me, I told her I loved her as a sister. She probably thought I meant it in that way. Which I do. Kind of.'

'Oh my god,' Emily thought, plopping down on her bed. 'He probably says the same thing to Lulu. If only he had really meant it. I hope he doesn't freak out because I said it. He can probably tell I'm some love sick puppy dog. I can't believe that just happened.'

'But it sounded nice,' each of them thought.

\*\*\*The next morning, Penthouse 1\*\*\*

Katie walked into the penthouse, almost willing Jason not to be there. He was there, sitting on the couch, playing with Michael. She almost turned around but she realized she was a grown up, not 13 years old.

'Good morning,' Katie said, in an even brisk tone. She was wearing a long black shirt, with a slit going up to just past her knee. She was wearing a pretty tight blue shirt, with a cute little jacket. She was carrying a shopping bag and a purse. Katie misunderstood Jason's prolonged stare at her appearance and sheepishly said, 'It's a good cover for the dock's. If I'm seen, I can just pretend I'm a shopper or something.'

'Good idea,' Jason said softly, smiling. He started to speak again, but Katie cut him off.

'Don't say anything. You were drunk, I was drunk. It meant nothing and I overreacted,' Jason opened his mouth to protest, but Katie rambled on. 'Besides, we have somewhere to be. Where's Sonny? SONNY!'

Sonny bounded down the steps and said, 'Right here drill seargent,

you don't have to yell or anything.'

Carly followed Sonny down the stairs, positioned herself against his ear and yelled, 'MORNING SONNY!'

Sonny jumped out of his skin, 'Geez, Carly,' he noticed her dark, business like dress, with the very important looking jacket. 'You look nice, going any where special.'

'Shadybrooke,' Carly said, causing Sonny's jaw to drop to the floor. He started to protest when she cut him off, 'Reynaldo is coming with me, it's perfectly safe. I need to do SOMETHING Sonny, I can't sit here and play Donna Reed.'

Katie could tell Sonny was about to forbid Carly to go anywhere so she piped up, 'She's perfectly capable Sonny. You have no say in the matter anyway. Come on, we're going to be late.'

Jason handed Michael to Carly and said, 'Remember Carly, keep your temper and no crazy stunts or plans.'

'Okay, honest to god,' Carly smiled, 'I'll be back by dinner, in one piece I swear.'

Sonny grabbed Carly's arm and whispered, 'I wish you would reconsider. Don't get involved in this business.'

Carly jerked her arm away and said in a low even tone, 'And I wish you would stop telling me what to do. I'm already involved, whether you like it or not. Trust meâ€¦please.'

Sonny couldn't say anything more to this head strong woman in front of him, he kissed her forehead and said, 'Come home for me, safe.'

Carly grinned and said, 'Same here.'

Katie turned and smiled as she ushered Sonny out of the door. 'Good luck Agent Caroline Carly Benson Roberts Spencer whatever.'

'Get out of here you dork,' Carly smiled as three of the most important people walked out of her life, and she couldn't help but feel an impending sense of dread.

\*\*\*Dock's an hour later\*\*\*

Jason got out of the limo, followed by Katie and Sonny. Sonny turned to Katie and said, 'You going to be okay.'

Katie gave him an expasperated smile and said, 'For the fiftieth time, I'll be fine. I hid in the background. I'm here for YOUR protection. So don't do anything drastic. That'll keep us all safe.'

Katie took her place in the back alley, an excellent spot to watch the action and not be seen. In a few minutes another limo pulled up, and Justus stepped out.

'Hello Jason, Sonny,' Justus said quietly.

Jason looked at his former attorney with surprise. ''I hadn't expected you.'' Jason said bluntly.

''Well, Mr. Moreno thought I would be the best man to deliver this message,'' Justus smiled arrogantly and continued, ''You have an agreement with Moreno, and I have to make sure you keep it.''

''What do you mean?'' Sonny asked, crossing his arms, holding three fingers up in the process. His gesture was unnoticed by Justus, but Katie saw it and immediately got her gun out of her purse and aimed. She also got her cell phone out and dialed a number on speed dial.

''Marcus,'' she whispered.

Taggart heard the terror in Katie's voice and his heart jumped. He knew something was up, Katie's whisper rang through his ears, ''The Docks on Lombard, NOW.''

She hung up and aimed for the back of Justus' head, ready to protect Jason and Sonny.

@###Front my enemies,

Front my foes,

Damn these hoes,

Is steppin' on my toes,

Back up off me,

Take your hands off me,

Give me room to breathe,

I'm not hearin' it,

I'm not fearin' it,

I'm up to my ears in it,@###@

''If we see you make another move to our property, you'll both be dead,'' Justus finished, sounding very smug and in control.

Jason looked at his former friend and said coldly, ''We don't take threats to well.''

@###@Hear my cries,

Hear my call,

Lend me your ears,

See my fall,

See my errors,

Know my faults,

Time halts,  
See my loss,  
Know I'm lacking,  
Backtracking,  
Where I met you,  
Pistol packing,  
Itchy finger,  
Trigger happy,  
Try to trap me,  
Bad rap,@###@

'This one you had better,' Justus said seeing something that made his heart fall into his gut. Four gun men had quietly positioned themselves behind Sonny and Jason. Sonny recognized the glint in Justus' eye and saw Katie coming out of her alley.

@###@Wiretap me,  
Backstab me,  
Break the faith,  
Fall from grace,  
Tell me lies,  
Time flies,  
Close your eyes,  
Come with me.  
Come with me,  
Yeah,  
Come with me,  
Uh-huh yeah,  
Yeah.@###@

In a split second Sonny pushed Jason down and pulled out his gun. Katie fired two shots already, hitting one gun man in the head and the other in his shoulder blade. You couldn't hear anything beside the sound of gun fire. Jason, Katie and Sonny found that there were obviously more gun men than the original five.

@###@You said to trust you,

You'd never hurt me,  
Now I'm disgusted,  
Since then adjusted,  
Certainly you fooled me,  
Ridiculed me,  
Left me hangin',  
Now sh\*t's boomerangin',  
Right back at ya,  
Think long-ranged,  
Narrow minded,  
Left me blinded,  
I co-signed it,  
Sh\*t backfired,  
Now I'm bouncin' back,  
I grinded,  
Not many would bear the pressure,  
You comprehend me,  
You musn't end me,  
You offend me,  
It's trauma,  
Feel the drama,  
Come with me.@@#@

The sound of an automatic cut through the air, sending off countless shots across the docks. Women screamed, sirens started blaring, and Justus Ward went down. Katie tried to find out where the shots were coming from when she felt a hand on her shoulder.

@#@#@I'm destructive,  
Some women find that seductive,  
Some say it's lunacy,  
Word diddly,  
I've been movin' on,  
I ignore you,

Sorry if I bore you,  
I neglect you,  
Don't mean to disrespect you,  
Can't you see--  
I love you dearly,  
And that's sincerely,  
But you annoy me,  
You can't avoid me,  
I'm here to stay,  
Forever,  
And ever and a day,  
That's never,  
I can't let you go,  
I can't forget it,  
Why you did it,  
I won't permit it,  
I won't acquit it,  
I'm gonna to fight you,  
I'll f\*ckin' bite you,  
Can't stand nobody like you,  
You can't run,  
You can't hide,  
No surprise,  
Close your eyes,  
Come with me.@#@#@

'Lucky!' Katie gasped, and put her gun down. It wouldn't have caused any harm, Katie had run out of bullets.

'Need help?' Lucky asked, breathlessly.

'Do you have bullets?' Katie asked.

Lucky shook his head, but instead pulled out a handgun. He grinned sheepishly and said, 'Reynaldo told me to bring it.'



'God Bless Reynaldo,' Katie said, took the gun and searched for her target. Sure enough, there was a man with an automatic in the second floor window of a building not too far off. Katie stood up, and maneuvered herself until she was fifty feet away from the window. She fired two shots, and the machine gun like shooting stopped.

Taggart finally arrived on the scene. He ran to Katie and grabbed her by her shoulders, 'Are you okay?' She nodded numbly, staring at the body that had fallen from the two story window. 'What in the hell happened?' Taggart demanded.

Katie snapped back to reality and said, 'I don't know, Sonny gave the sign and these gunmen came behind him. Oh god, Sonny and Jason.'

Katie ran surprisingly well in her one and a half inch heels and reached Sonny and Jason before Taggart. Jason saw her first. She had scratches on her face and hands from shattered glass, he got up and asked her frantically, 'God, Katie are you okay?'

'Fine,' Katie muttered, looking at the body Jason had been leaning over. Justus Ward. She knelt down and tried paramedics. She said quietly, 'His vitals are fading, where are the god damn ambulances?'

'On the way,' Lucky said climbing out of the shot up limo.

'Jason,' Justus whispered dryly, clutching his stomach, which was covered in blood. 'I didn't know.'

'It's okay Justus,' Jason said softly, hoping to ease his pain.

'No,' Justus said fiercely. 'There's a bomb.'

Taggart cursed silently and Katie's pulse quickened.

'Where's the bomb Justus?' Jason demanded.

'In the, god he's so sick,' Justus laughed, causing himself more pain. 'You have to stop it, that bombâ€|it can't go off. So manyâ€|innocent.'

Justus passed out, Jason checked his pulse and sighed. 'He just passed out, from the pain probably.'

'We have to find it,' Taggart said desperately.

'No really,' Sonny growled angrily. 'But where do we start looking?'

Katie looked around searching frantically. It could be anywhere. She spotted a large building and gasped, 'Oh godâ€|the elementary school.'

\*\*\*Shadybrooke\*\*\*

Carly walked in to the visitors area and saw Annie, the ex-mob wife.

At first Annie looked at Carly and smiled, but she suddenly remembered who just what Carly was and she frowned.

'Hello Annie,' Carly said cheerfully.

'Carly,' Annie said calmly. 'I'm surprised to see you here. I trust your visit isn't entirely personal.'

'Always to the point Annie,' Carly smiled and said seriously, 'I need information.'

Annie just returned Carly's sweet smile, not saying a word.

'Your ex husband is one of Moreno's men. I know that you have contact with him. You used to tell me things.' Annie continued to smile, pursing her lips slightly. 'You also thought I was crazy then so I guess you thought you were kind of safe. Annie come on, you know you don't love your ex, what would it hurt to tell me some secrets.'

Annie remained sitting and smiling, trying to ignore the truth in Carly's words.

'Please Annie,' Carly wheedled. 'I came all of this way, and you know, he would sell you out in a second.'

'He already has,' Annie laughed bitterly and added cryptically, 'You know what Carly. I'm surprised you're here right now.'

'What do you mean?' Carly asked, that feeling of dread returning to her stomach.

'Because there's a hit, planned for today,' Annie said, her smile finally fading and a sympathetic look crossing her face. 'On your mob friend.'

'Oh god, when?'

Annie looked at her watch, and said quietly 'Now.'

Carly jumped up from her seat, trying desperately to catch her breath. Sonny and Jason and oh god Katie, Carly could feel the terror consume her. She knew something had gone wrong and they hadn't really been prepared for it. She turned to leave and Annie called out,

'Carly,' Carly turned to Annie and received the following advice, 'Moreno goes after woman and children. Protect yourself and your baby.'

Carly's stomach churned and she ran to the car, she gasped the news to Reynaldo and they sped towards Port Charles, hoping to God that they weren't too late.

\*\*\*Docks\*\*\*

Emily finally gets up from the place she had been laying on the launch. She looked out into the water and saw Nikolas' boat but no Nikolas.

'Oh god,' Emily breathed, she screamed out 'Nikolas are you all right, please Nikolas are you there?'

After a few seconds Nikolas rose shakily from his boat and threw a rope to Emily, in a few seconds he was up on the dock's and in Emily's arms.

She babbled into his shirt front, 'Oh god, thank you. You're all right. I've never been so worried.'

'Shh, I'm fine Emily,' Nikolas soothed, smoothing her hair. A terrifying thought consumed him. 'Katie.'

Emily looked at him, her eyes wide with fear. They began running to the place the gunfire had been coming from.

They came upon the clearing, with the shot up limousine, Katie was there and she was barking orders out.

'We have to get it evacuated,' Katie yelled.

'Are you sure that's the place?' Sonny asked.

'Where else,' Taggert said grimly.

'Stop talking, we need to move,' Katie began running towards the direction of the school and she was followed by the rest of the people. And they all prayed that they weren't too late.

The gun shots had scared the entire elementary school half to death. Every classroom was filled with crying children. Teachers were trying to ignore their own fears and calm the hysterical children.

Katie ran into the school and looked at Jason who was directly behind her. She said, 'Start evacuating, now.'

Jason nodded and turned to the rest of the group, and for the first time saw his little sister Emily, he swallowed the urge to send her away and said, 'Go to the rooms, get the kids as far away from the school as you can.'

Katie barged into the principal's office and barked, 'You need to get out, now.'

'Young lady, there is a shootout just outside,' the principal stammered.

'AND THERE'S A BOMB IN THIS SCHOOL!' Katie yelled and said quickly before turning and heading towards the nearest classroom. 'Go over the intercom and tell teachers to evacuate, NOW.'

The principal feebly complied and his voice came over calmly on the intercom. 'We've had a slight disturbance, we need to evacuate the school as soon as possible. Children,' his voice cracked, 'don't panic, this is just like a fire drill. Hurry.'

Soon the entire school was in chaos. Most of the children were out when Katie ran out with the a class of crying first graders. She looked at Taggert and said, 'How many more?'

Taggert turned to the principal, who was trying to do a head count.

'Oh god,' said one of the teachers. 'The kindergarten class, they're in the basement.'

Soon Katie and Jason were running toward the school as fast as they possibly could, they were about fifty feet away when the bomb exploded, sending smoke, glass and concrete hurtling at them. Jason and Katie threw themselves to the ground, and Jason tried to cover Katie as best as he could.

When the dust had settled, Katie looked up and gasped as she saw half of the school was in ruins, 'Oh god, this can't be happening.'

\*\*\*Carly and Reynaldo's car\*\*\*

Carly couldn't help but feel this unbelievable fear multiplying inside of her. She kept on trying to tell herself that Jason, Sonny and Katie were fine, they could take care of themselves. Her mind didn't entirely believe her however. Annie's last comment had made Carly hysterical inside. She had left Michael at home with Latecia. There were guards, 'but', Carly thought grimly 'Guards die.'

She was about to ask Reynaldo who was watching the door at the penthouse today when she saw it. A car was speeding toward them in the opposite direction.

'God, he's in our lane Reynaldo,' Carly cried, 'Do something!'

Reynaldo complied by pulling the car into a ditch and pushing Carly as far down onto the floor as she would go. Carly blessed his quick thinking and capable hands, because moments later bullets flew through the window of the car.

Once it seemed like the shooting was over, Reynaldo tensely got up and looked around. Carly was numb, her fear was beyond enormous, so much so that she almost thought she was thinking clearly when she said, 'Come on, we have to get out of this car.'

Reynaldo agreed and said, 'Hurry, I smell gas leaking.'

Carly and Reynaldo scrambled out of the car and ran in the opposite direction, they were about fifty feet away when the car burst into flames. Realizations hit Carly as fast and as hard as the bullets had hit the car.

'God, they knew where we were, what we were doing. We have to get home. Michael and Latecia are all alone.'

Reynaldo said nothing, but grabbed her hand and they started walking the remaining three miles to Port Charles.

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

Luke got out of the elevator, he had heard the shoot-out down by the docks. After fighting the urge to go down to the docks and help, he

decided he should go to the penthouse. He knew that there were unprotected women and Michael in the penthouse. And he thought if Jason and Sonny were on the receiving end of an ambush, the penthouse would be a likely target.

Sure enough as Luke walked out of the elevator, there were two men at the door, one was holding a gun to the guard's head. Luke walked up behind them silently and knocked the gun out of the man's hand and held him in a choke-hold. The penthouse guard was relieved to see reinforcements and easily disarmed the other man, and knocked him out with one swift punch.

'Are there any others?' Luke asked.

'No, these are the first,' the guard said grimly.

'And hopefully the last.'

\*\*\*The school\*\*\*

Katie couldn't breathe, she was surrounded by concrete dust that filled her lungs and made her choke. She heard cries, Jason had tried to stop her, but she swore she heard cries, and as the rest of the make-shift rescue team followed her, they heard them too.

So they began to dig, moving heavy steel beams and large pieces of concrete.

'The basement is a fallout shelter,' the principal said grimly.

'They're still alive,' Emily kept repeating to herself, and to any one who would listen.

Sonny, Jason, Lucky and Nikolas moved a huge steel beam and saw the hole in the ground. It was dark and dusty, and the newly exposed hole shed a single ray of light on to the bottom. Upon seeing the light, the crying intensified.

A teacher's voice from down below screamed, 'We're down here, please hurry. There are hurt children!'

Her cries did not go unheard, people starting moving things frantically, until there was a big enough hole for a ladder. By that time the fire company had arrived and they started sending children up, one by one.

Emily gasped at the sight of them, bleeding, crying. Their clothes were ripped and bloody. The blood on their babyish faces only seemed to intensify their innocence, it asked any one who looked at them why this had happened to them. Emily turned to Nikolas and buried her face in his chest, sobbing. He soothed her and naturally held her in his arms.

'Take her to the hospital too,' Jason gently told Nikolas. Emily had received several bruises during the rescue of the children. Jason turned to Katie, who seemed catatonic. He laid his hand on her arm and tried to discern if she was all right.

'I'm fine,' Katie answered before the question was asked. Her eyes

opened wide and she yelled, ''The penthouse, oh god Michael.''

''I called,'' Sonny said, handing the cell phone back to Jason.  
''Luke's over there right now, seems that Michael had some unwanted guests.''

Jason grew angry and cursed, ''Dammit,'' his hands flew to his face, in a effort to rub his eyes. His hand rubbed an open wound, making him cringe in pain.

Katie heard his wince and said, ''Michael will be okay, Luke is there and Carly will be home soon, let's get you to the hospital.''

Coming up:

The aftermath of the explosion

Chapter 17

\*\*\*Hospital\*\*\*

Bobbie is treating yet another small child for cuts and bruises; she sighs, thanking some higher power that she didn't have to tend to the really hurt children. The children with broken bones, concussions and cuts that desperately needed stitches were taken care of first.

Bobbie's heart broke as she walked into the hallway to see crying parents. She wouldn't wish that kind of pain on anyone, watching your child in pain. Just then Bobbie saw Katie, covered in cuts and bruises, her clothing torn and filthy. Bobbie panicked when she didn't see Carly with Katie, she knew that they were always together.

Katie was pacing outside of a hospital door looking distracted. Bobbie thought the worst, thinking that Carly was behind those closed doors, her daughter was hurt. She rushed up to Katie and asked breathlessly, ''Carly?''

''What?'' Katie said, snapping out of her reverie. ''No Carly's fine. She wasn't even in town.''

''Then who are you waiting for?''

''Jason,'' Katie said, her eyes filling with fear. ''He had a pretty bad cut on his head, we were on our way to the hospital when he passed out.''

''Oh god,'' Bobbie said, her eyes filling with concern. ''Why were you down at the docks Katie?''

Katie bit her lip and stated flatly, ''Business.''

Bobbie shook her head and said angrily, ''Not you too. Carly really knows how to pick her friends.''

Katie grimaced and said, ''If Carly were in danger, she would have countless people protecting her.''

'You had better be right,' Bobbie said, and turned around in a huff, just in time to see her daughter trudging into hospital.

Carly looked as if she had been in an explosion too, her stockings were ripped and her hair was a mess. Her general appearance was dirty; Bobbie ran to her daughter babbling, 'Oh god Carly, are you okay? What happened?'

'I'm fine mamma, really,' Carly said, hugging her mother briefly, before spotting Katie. She broke out of her mother's embrace and ran to Katie, crying, 'Oh Katie, I was so worried, you're really ok though. Where's Jason and Sonny? What about Michael? Tell me he's okay.'

'Michael is fine. Sonny is working with Taggart on damage control. He should be back shortly,' Katie took a deep breath, 'and Jason is uhmm, he's in there.'

Carly looked into the direction Katie was an emergency room. 'What's wrong with him?'

'He has a nasty cut on his forehead,' the doctor said, coming out of the room. 'He lost some blood but he'll be fine. He's just going to rest a little while and then he can go home.'

Carly breathed a sigh of relief and Katie's face lit up like the 4th of July. Carly turned to Katie and hugged her fiercely whispering, 'I'm never letting you out of my sight, ever again.'

'And what am I?' Sonny said coming down the hallway, 'Chopped liver?'

Carly turned with a huge grin on her face and ran to him. Sonny gathered her in his arms and smoothed her hair. He noticed her appearance and said, 'What happened to you?'

'On the way back from Shadybrooke, we were run off the road by another car, and then they kind of shot at us,' Carly said quietly.

'Kind of?' Sonny asked, his blood boiling.

'It blew up.'

'God Carly, I told you this was dangerous,' Sonny began, but was cut off by Carly placing her fingers on her lips.

'Can't we just go home?' Carly said, tears coming to her eyes. 'I need to see Michael.'

Katie walked up and placed a hand on Sonny's shoulder. 'Take Caroline home, Lucky and I will bring Jason home later.'

Sonny nodded and took Carly's hand, slowly walking out of the hospital. Katie turned and quietly went into Jason's room. He was lying on the bed, his forehead bandaged. He looked so different, not at all the stonefaced mobster. He looked peaceful and young.

Katie walked up to his bed and just stared at him. His chiseled,

handsome face his strong arms. His perfect chest, which was revealed by a rip in his shirt. Katie touched his hand lightly, almost afraid of breaking this peaceful, uncomplicated moment.

Jason's eyes fluttered open and Katie's breath was taken away by those clear blue eyes.

'Hey Thomas,' he said quietly.

'Hey Morgan,' she smiled. 'Don't scare me like that, ever again.'

'How long was I out?' he asked, stretching slightly, pain rushing to his head.

'Maybe two hours,' Katie said and then brightly added, 'If you can stand up without getting dizzy, I'm pretty sure we can go home.'

'I'll definitely do that then,' Jason smiled, slowly getting up out of the bed, perhaps not slowly enough because he fell into Katie, who had opened her arms to try to catch him.

Perhaps Katie overestimated her strength because Jason's body fell out of her hands and landed back on the bed, in her attempt to save him, Katie landed on top of him. Jason opened his eyes again and laughed.

'Weren't we in this kind of a position before?' He chuckled, staring straight into her light brown eyes.

Katie quickly got up, feeling her head rush too. She hurried to the door and said, 'I'll get your release papers and tell Lucky to get us a car to go home.'

\*\*\*Another part of the hospital\*\*\*

Nikolas and Emily were in a waiting room, for no reason really. They were both sipping horrible coffee and finding comfort in each other's presence. Lucky walked up to them and said, 'Why are you guys still here?'

'I'd rather be here than face Grandfather,' Emily said glumly.

Lucky nodded in understanding. 'I'm going back to the penthouse. Katie asked me to invite you over for later. It seemed pretty important.'

'Sure,' Nikolas said. He looked directly at Emily 'We'll be over in an hour or so. Emily and I have some things to talk about.'

Lucky raised his eyebrows and said, 'Okay, I'll see you then.'

After Lucky walked out of earshot Emily looked at Nikolas and nervously said, 'What's wrong?'

'I just wanted to clear something up,' Nikolas said, trying not to



let the nervousness into his voice.

'About?' Emily said, her pulse quickening.

'Uh, Last night on the phone. And the other night at the mansion, and just a lot of things. I need to tell you something,' Nikolas said ringing his hands and trying to make contact with Emily's eyes.

'Go on,' Emily breathed.

'EMILY QUARTERMAINE!' Edward's voice bellowed throughout the waiting room.

Emily rolled her eyes and Nikolas groaned. Emily said in an exasperated tone, 'yes Grandfather?'

'What is the meaning of this young lady, one of the nurses called the mansion and told me you were in the hospital. Why look at you,' Edward said, looking at Emily's dirty disheveled appearance, 'You look like you were right in the middle of the explosion.'

'No Grandfather,' Emily said solemnly. 'The children in the middle of the explosion looked a lot worse than me.'

'I don't care young lady,' Edward said, his anger picking up steam, 'You should have been at home, not gallivanting off with some hoodlum and that evil Cassadine spawn.'

'You're starting to sound like Luke Spencer, Grandfather,' Emily said, growing tired of his rantings.

'How dare you compare me to that cheap thug?' Edward gasped. 'If you had been at home where you belong, none of this would have happened.'

Nikolas could not take anymore of Edward, he said loudly and forcefully, 'If Emily had been at home, three classrooms full of children would be dead. We didn't go looking for an explosion Mr. Quartermaine, we just happened to be there.'

Edward was shocked at Nikolas' outburst and could not say anything that would not result in his granddaughter hating him more. Nikolas took Emily's hand and said, 'Come on Em, let's go.'

\*\*\*Limousine\*\*\*

Jason, Katie and Lucky were sitting in the backseat of this new limousine. Katie was blushing fiercely and staring straight ahead. Lucky was looking out the window solemnly and Jason was rubbing his eyes, willing the pain to go away.

'So Lucky,' Jason asked quietly. 'What were you doing at the dock's today?'

Lucky and Katie looked at each other nervously and Lucky lied, 'Just walking around.'

Jason nodded and looked Lucky straight in the face and said, 'So

Lucky, what were you really doing at the dock's today. And where did you happen to find that gun?''

Lucky looked at his hands sheepishly and Katie cleared her throat. ''I told Lucky about the meeting at the docks. And I told him I wouldn't stop him from going.''

''You what?'' Jason said, his face reddening.

''I told him I wouldn't stop him from being there,'' Katie said calmly.

''WHY?'' Jason bellowed. ''WHY would you do that? Do you know how dangerous that was?''

Katie looked up sharply and blurted, ''I was THERE Morgan. I know how dangerous it was.''

''I can't believe you would do something so stupid!'' Jason yelled, the veins on his forehead popping out.

''EXCUSE ME?'' Katie hissed. ''You're damn lucky that I did something so stupid. You would have probably died and so would have eight hundred children. And don't talk about stupid things to me, you're the one that left the mob be overtaken by Moreno in the first place. So if you really want something really stupid look in the mirror!''

They had reached the penthouse garage and Katie barged out of the limo and ran towards the stairs, leaving an angry Jason and speechless Lucky behind.

Coming up:

A group meeting

Katie meets Laura

Jason apologizes to ???

Carly misunderstands Sonny

Chapter 18

\*\*\*Accident Scene\*\*\*

Taggart takes one last look at the rubble behind him, wishing he were someone else, somewhere else, far far away. To say he had a busy day would be an understatement. His partner almost got shot to pieces, then she almost got blown to bits. He had ushered hundreds of crying children out of a building that was ready to explode, then helped dig thirty five year olds out from a pile of rubble. He had to deal with the press, cover up the Justus' involvement, and destroy evidence before the real police got there.

Taggart sighed, and rubbed his forehead, trying to erase his memory of the hurt and bleeding children. When he looked up he saw Mac Scorpio and V. Ardanowski standing right in front of him. His day was just about to get a great deal worse.

'What in the hell happened Taggert?' Mac hissed.

'Well sir,' Taggert said sarcastically, 'A freaking school blew up! Do I need to draw you a picture?'

'Why were you here?' Mac demanded.

Taggert sighed, no matter how incompetent Scorpio was, he still managed to say the most asinine sometime. 'Because there was a call, I responded to it.'

'No you idiot,' Mac said, his aggravation growing. 'You were here before it exploded.'

'How do you know that?' Taggert demanded. Mac pointed to a little kid standing behind a police line. The kid was holding on to his mother's hand and waving frantically at Taggert.

'He's the one who got me out of the school Mommy! The bald one!' the little kid jumped up and down enthusiastically.

Taggert rolled his eyes, wishing for a moment that he had left the little brat in the school. He turned to Mac and said seriously, 'I got a call. I tip-off. There wasn't really time to get backup, besides most of the squad cars were at the shootout.'

'I don't understand how there was enough time for you to get over to the school,' V piped in, looking at Taggert with scrutinizing eyes.

'What the hell are you doing here?' Taggert asked exasperation in every inch of his face. 'You're not a cop!'

V stammered, 'I'm a private investigator.'

'Sure,' Taggert said, glad that the subject had changed. 'I'd like to see your license.'

'ENOUGH!' Mac said and turned to Taggert, 'You received at tip-off? Next time make sure everyone knows about the tip off.'

'Yes Commissioner,' Taggert said in an even monotone voice.

Mac looked at Taggert closely, he was covered in ashes from head to foot, rips in his pants and shirt. He patted Taggert's shoulder and said earnestly, 'Thank you, Maxie was one of the first outside, she said you came and got her class.'

'It's my job,' Taggert said honestly.

'Well job well done,' Mac said, a stern face taking over his visage. 'We'll have a meeting about possible mob implications tomorrow morning. Go home and get some rest.'

Mac turned, leaving V and Taggert standing there in the street. V looked at Taggert closely and finally said, 'I don't believe you.'

Taggert rubbed his bald head, finally feeling exhaustion setting in.

He still had to go to the penthouse. He didn't have time for little miss private investigator. He ooked at her coldly and said before walking away, ''I don't care.''

\*\*\*Penthouse 1\*\*\*

Carly runs in through the door, seeing Luke playing with Michael on the couch. She picks up the baby, crying and stammering, ''Oh my precious little boy, Mama is never ever going to leave you again.''

Luke surveyed her appearance and Reynaldo and Sonny's appearances. ''Geez what happened to you all? Explosion or something?''

Carly just started to laugh, walking around bouncing Michael in her arms.

Sonny grimaced and said, ''Carly visited Shadybrokke today, her car was run off of the road and shot at. And there was also a shootout and explosion down at the docks today, which Jason, Katie and I were involved in. And Lucky.''

Luke's face went ashen at the mention of Lucky, Carly saw his worry and said brightly, ''Don't worry Uncle of mine, Lucky's alive and as obnoxious as you ever were.''

Luke blinked and digested this bit of good news and said, ''Well, glad to hear it. We had a little visit today too, didn't we Mikey?''

Carly stopped playing with Michael and looked at Luke seriously and breathed, ''Who?''

''Hired goons, came to the door with guns to take your baby away. Don't worry Caroline, I got here before they could even get in the front door.''

Carly's jaw had dropped and she said calmly, ''Don't worry. Okay, I won't. Sonny? Can you make sure there are extra guards around. FULL TIME.''

Sonny nodded numbly, surprised that Carly was so calm. Carly walked up the stairs muttering ''Don't worry Mikey, mama will never leave you. No mean man is going to take you away.''

Luke turned to Sonny and let out a low whistle. ''I'm surprised she hasn't shot anyone,'' Luke joked, desperately wanting to brighten the grim mood.''

''Not funny Luke,'' Sonny said seriously. ''We've all had a very long day.''

''Ohkayâ€¦what's up with you and Caroline?'' Luke asked, his eyebrows raised. ''Im ean I saw the way you two were dancing last Friday.''

''Caroline and I are friends, I like her a lot,'' Sonny said, trying to ignore Luke's amused glance. Sonny said with a sarcastic smile, but serious voice. ''I would never get involved with anyone emotionally unstable or dangerous to my health Luke. You don't have

to worry about me and Carly.'

Unfortunately Carly was at the top of the stairs and heard Sonny's last two sentences. She didn't here the context or see Sonny's sarcastic smile. She did see te lighth in his eyes as she descended the stairs, but she thought his suddenly happy eyes were laughing at her, when they were actually happy to see her.

Luke turned and saw the sudden fire in Carly's eyes and wondered what they possibly could mean, he didn't get a chance to ask, because Jason came storming intot he penthouse, slamming the front door closed, calling everyone's attention to him.

'Hey Jase,' Carly said, reading the anger all over his face, she said tentatively, 'Are you okay?'

'I don't want to talk about it,' Jason growled and stomped in the direction of his room, barely giving anyone in the room a second glance.

\*\*\*Penthouse Two\*\*\*

Lucky runs into the penthouse he and Katie share, calling out, 'Kate? Katie are you here?'

Katie comes out in her bathrobe, towels and dirty clothing piled in her hands, 'Don't say a word Lucky.'

'What?' Lucky said confused. 'I just wanted to make sure you were okay.'

'I'm fine I need a shower though,' Katie said, her tone lightening.

'About this thing with Jason,' Lucky began, seeing the anger and tension returning to Katie's face he put up his hands in surrender. 'I just wanted to thank you.'

'I was saying and doing what I think is right,' Katie said, throwing the torn, dirty clothes in the trashcan. 'If you want a chance to prove yourself, and do what you love, I shouldn't try to stop you. I should help you.'

'You know, Jason was just blowing off steam, he's not reallyâ€|'

'I don't want to talk about Jason,' Katie cut off. 'I'm going to take a shower.'

Katie walked out of the room, leaving Lucky standing there awkwardly.

\*\*\*Stefan's office at General Hospital\*\*\*

Stefan is on the phone, fielding a call from the press about the explosion. Alexis walks in and Stefan motions her to take a seat.

'Yes, we believe that we took care of the situation to the best of our ability,' Stefan states, 'Goodbye.'

He hangs up and Alexis asks, ''Busy Day?''

Stefan gives her an exasperated look, his voice resonates throughout the room, ''Do you know where Nikolas is?''

''No, why?'' Alexis asks.

''It seems that Nikolas has decided to become a hero,'' Stefan says, folding his hands in front of him. ''He was at the bombing today, rescuing children.''

''Is he all right?'' Alexis gasped.

''He has not been treated in this hospital. Amy Vining said he was in the waiting area, and left with Emily Quartermaine,'' Stefan says the name Quartermaine with contempt. ''The Quartermaines do not know where Emily or Nikolas is at the moment.''

Alexis knew however, Emily and Nikolas were probably at the penthouse for the meeting that was called since this afternoon's events. She looked at Stefan and wondered if she should invite him. He is a Cassadine after all, and may be interested in knowing about Katya Cassadine. Alexis decided that was Katie's choice, not hers and she shrugged and said, ''I'll keep my eyes open for Nikolas, I'm sure he'll be home shortly.''

Stefan looked at Alexis closely, he could sense that she was hiding something, but did not get the chance to answer that question because Alexis' cell phone began to ring.

''Excuse me,'' Alexis said, getting her phone out of her purse, ''Hello?''

''Hey,'' Ned said, ''I was worried about you.''

''I'm fine,'' Alexis said looking towards Stefan and saying, ''I'll see you tomorrow, don't worry about Nikolas.''

Alexis stepped out of the office and said to Ned, ''How are you?''

''A little worried to say the least,'' Ned says, ''Emily was at the explosion today.''

''Yes, so was Nikolas,'' Alexis says, glancing at her watch. ''They are both fine though. Do you need anything?''

Ned is taken a back by Alexis' hurried tone, ''Am I keeping you from anything?''

''Actually,'' Alexis sighed, ''I have a meeting right now. Can I call you later?''

''Uhh, yea,'' Ned says, surprised and shocked at the immediate dial tone he hears, wondering what in the world Alexis was up to know.

\*\*\*Penthouse Two\*\*\*

Katie is sitting in the living room, trying to patch up her cuts and bruises, Lucky walks out of his room, showered and clothed. Katie hisses as she puts antiseptic on a large cut on her leg and fumbles with the bandage.

'Here let me,' Lucky says, sitting next to Katie on the couch. He bandages her leg expertly and starts looking for other cuts. When he hears Katie's sharp intake of breath as he puts more antiseptic on another cut he says, 'You know, I just want to thank you.'

'Didn't you already do that?' Katie said, inspecting her arms for cuts.

'I just, I felt so good today, knowing that I had saved a life or two,' Lucky says trying to put his thoughts into words, 'It was unbelievable. I mean, I felt so guilty aboutâ€|'

'Elizabeth?' Katie said looking up from the deep cut she has found on her upper arm. Lucky nods solemnly and gets ready to pour the antiseptic on the cut. Katie backed away in fear.

Lucky half chuckled, 'You didn't seem afraid of anything that happened today, you can't be too worried about antiseptic.'

'Everyone's afraid of something,' Katie said quietly. 'Fine, talk to me while you do it though. Tell me about something soothing, tell me about Elizabeth.'

Lucky's eyes grow bright and he starts by saying, 'She was one of the bravest people I've ever known. She looked life in the face and just survivedâ€|'

Katie smiled and listened as Lucky talked about Elizabeth, she almost could block out the terrifying images from earlier that day.

\*\*\*Penthouse One\*\*\*

Sonny, Carly, Luke and Michael are sitting on the couch as Jason comes down the stairs, in new clothes and a slightly less angry attitude. Carly decided not to ask what is wrong and Luke has already decided to keep his nose out of Jason's business.

Sonny senses his friend's turmoil and quietly says, 'Katie said that everyone would meet here at six. They should be getting here shortly.'

Jason shrugs and says, 'Tomorrow we need to make a withdrawal from the bank, for Justus. He needs to get out of Port Charles, away from Moreno.'

'I don't appreciate giving my money to backstabber's,' Sonny grumbles, not understanding Jason's sense of forgiveness.

'Justus was confused,' Jason stated simply. 'And it was my fault he got involved in the business in the first place.'

'Jason, you can't blame yourself for another person's choices,'

Carly said quietly, ''you're starting to sound like Robin.''

Jason's body tensed at the mention of Robin's name and he looked at Carly and said coldly, ''Justus is my friend, I would do the same thing for you.''

Carly left it at that, for just then Katie and Lucky walked in. Katie scowled at the sight of Jason and went over to Carly, who began fretting over Katie's wounds.

''Are you sure you're okay Katie?'' Carly said with sympathy, ''That's a lot of bruises and bandages.''

''I'm fine,'' Katie said quietly, picking up Michael and playing with his hands.

Lucky looked at his father and said, ''Hey.''

''Hey cowboy,'' Luke said smiling, ''Heard that you were a hero today.''

''There were a lot of heroes today,'' Lucky said humbly, but grinned just the same at the thought of himself being a hero.

The guard pokes his head in and says, ''Emily and Nikolas are here.:

''Let them in,'' Jason and Katie said simultaneously, staring at each other coldly.

Emily walks in uncomfortably, she and Nikolas didn't get a second chance to talk since the hospital and she was dying inside. She sat next to Carly, hoping to talk to her at the first chance she got, Nikolas stood beside Lucky feeling completely uncomfortable with the same people he had eaten Thanksgiving dinner with.

''Who are we waiting for?'' Sonny asked quietly, afraid that his whisper would send everyone in the room into a rage. Carly had not said a word to him in the last hour. Jason and Katie looked as if they were about to kill each other. Nikolas and Emily were both red-faced and seemed to be embarrassed to talk. And Luke and Lucky seemed to be sponges, soaking up the tension in the room.

''Just us,'' Alexis said as she walked into the penthouse with Taggert.

''Are we ready to start then?'' Katie said quickly, before Jason got a chance to open his mouth.

The people in the room let out varying degrees of agreement, Katie ran her hand through her hair and grimly said, ''Well to start out with, the honeymoon is definitely over.''

\*\*\*Cottage\*\*\*

AJ knocks on Robin's door for what seems like the millionth time in the last week. Robin answers the door expectantly, hoping to see Jason. She hid her disappointment well, AJ didn't see that he wasn't the person she wanted to see.



'Hey,' AJ said nervously. 'I'm glad to see you're here. You weren't involved in the explosion at least.'

'No, I was home when that happened,' Robin said grimly. That had not stopped her from placing a million phone calls to the hospital to make sure Jason was all right. She was relieved to know that he was fine. However, it still tore her apart to not see him and just make him know how much she loved him.

'When are you done with classes?' AJ asked suddenly.

Robin grimaced yet again, she had skipped all of her classes this week. She just didn't feel like facing the world. She hadn't told anyone, but she really wanted to drop out. There was a battle taking place in Robin's mind, the part that still wanted her to live her life was losing rapidly to the part of her that wanted to die without Jason. She didn't even recognize herself in the mirror this morning. She looked up at AJ, who was being so kind to her in the past couple of days, who she had kept a terrible secret from and she told him the truth, a truth she hadn't really event old herself yet, 'I dropped out of school AJ, or at least I'm going to.'

AJ looked at Robin in shock. Her situation wasn't totally unlike his situation with alcohol. She was addicted to Jason, and without him, her life was worthless. So she really needed to make a new life. AJ's face conveyed complete understanding of Robin's choices. The initial display of shock had worn off and he smiled warmly and said, 'Perfect, pack your bags, we're going to Europe.'

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

'And,' Katie continued before the unruly group of people could start talking, 'Everyone in this room has to consider how involved they want to be in this project,' katie looked directly at Jason, 'There's a lot of danger involved and to be honest any of us could be killed at any time. So what I'm asking I guess is, are you in?'

Katie looked from face to face in this random group of people. They all seemed to be in deep thought, Alexis ventured the first comment when she blurted, 'Six months ago, I would have laughed if someone would have told me where I would be right now. And who I would be with. But right now, it makes perfect senseâ€|so, I'm in.'

Taggert said without a second thought, 'Do you even have to ask, I want this guy more than ever.'

Carly said quietly, 'I don't know what you would need me for anymore, but if you do need me, I'll be there without a second thought.'

Sonny said, 'I've always been in danger. But now, it's for something, not money, but something that will save my soul eventually. So yes, I'm in.'

Luke drawled, 'I laugh in the face of danger sweetheart, count me in.'

Lucky cleared his throat and said, 'I want to help more than I want

to do anything else in the world right now.'

Nikolas nodded adding, 'I'll help with anything you need.'

Emily blurted, 'Me too, I mean I'll help.'

'I don't think that's a good idea Em,' Jason interjected, directing his comment to all of the teenagers, 'This isn't your business, any of you.'

'You can't tell us what to do,' Lucky said with quiet resolve.

'You don't understand, this is dangerous,' Jason said, anger coming over his face.

'Jason,' Emily said, her anger almost matching Jason's. 'I think I've been controlled enough in my life, I thought you understood that.'

'Emily please,' Jason pleaded.

'My mind is made up Jason,' Emily said quietly. 'Please respect that.'

Jason looked down at his hands, trying desperately to control his emotions. He didn't realize that everyone was looking at him, waiting for his response to Katie's original question. He looked up and said, 'I'm involved in this until Moreno is gone, and Helena Cassadine isn't a threat.'

'Me too,' a female voice said from the door to the penthouse. Everyone turned and those who knew who she was, were shocked to see Venus Ardanowski standing at the door, wearing a hopeful, determined expression.

\*\*\*Cottage\*\*\*

'Europe?' Robin said, a surprised and happy smile appearing on her face.

'Yea,' AJ said enthusiastically. 'I mean don't you miss it? Wouldn't it be kind of fun for the holidays? Just you and me. Get away from it all.'

'I don't know AJ,' Robin said, a dark cloud passing through her eyes.

'Come on Robin,' AJ pleaded taking her hands in his. 'Believe me, you need this. Port Charles will be the same when we come back.'

Robin searched AJ's hopeful face, trying to evaluate his sincerity. She knew that he wanted her to be happy, for what reason she couldn't begin to understand. She thought about the grim prospect of the holidays on Port Charles. She said slyly, 'I do miss Paris.'

AJ jumped up slightly, glee taking over his entire personage, 'Great, wonderful good. I'll make the reservations, leave everything to me. Just pack and be ready to go by the end of the week. Okay?'

Robin laughed and said, ''Okay.''

\*\*\*Penthouse\*\*\*

''I'm sorry,' ' V said earnestly and began to babble ''I didn't mean to intrude its just that I followed Detective Taggart and I just knocked the guard out, I listened to your entire situation and I really believe that I could help.''

''Who are you?'' Carly asked, baffled at this woman's prescence.

''V. Ardanowski, I'm an ex police officer. I want in. I really want in,' ' V said earnestly, winning over everyone in the room with her honesty and earnestness.

''You're in,' ' Katie said, which caused Taggart to slap his forehead.

''Why don't we invite Lila Quartermaine in our little plan while we're trying to put together the weirdest group of people ever,' ' Taggart excalimed.

''Lila's not weird,' ' Emily said honestly.

''That's a great idea,' ' Luke said laughing, ''Lila's a tough cookie.''

Katie rolled her eyes and smiled at the antics that errupted in the room, even Jason was smiling. She broke into the happiness saying, ''Okay, let's get to business. Where do we want to order dinner from?''

Her serious statement only resulted in more laughter from the motley crew in the penthouse.

\*\*\*Hours later\*\*\*

Taggart and Katie are standing in the hallway between the penthouses, they had discussed the next course of action and then found that the meeting turned into a party of sorts, as it often did with that group of people. Katie had walked out of the penthouse, in no real mood to have fun. Taggart followed her out into the hall, concerned about his partner.

''So, are you going to tell me about it Kate?'' Taggart said, giving a charming grin to his distressed partner.

Katie had her back turned to Taggart and breathed deeply. Her voice finally managed to squeak out of her throat, tears threatening to spill, ''They never really prepare you. I mean I didn't know how it would make me feel, killing.''

Taggart walked to his partner and put his hand on her shoulder, ''I thought you had already dealt with killing before.''

Katie turned, her face streaked with tears, ''I did, but the WSB is really good about, keeping death from you. I saw his face today

Taggart, as he fell, on the ground. He was dead, he could have had a life, a familyâ€|hopes and dreams. I killed that.'

Taggart grabbed Katie and gave her a fierce hug, 'Hey kid, that guy was not worth your tears. He was scum, a hired man who killed people for money, who would have killed you.'

'I know, I know I did the right thing,' Katie sniffed, wiping the tears away. 'I had to. It's just hard to adjust.'

Taggart nodded and said, 'Get some sleep. Think about all the little brats you saved today,' he smiled as Katie turned to her penthouse door, 'And Katie?'

'Yea?'

'I cried for hours after..you know the first time I killed someone.'

Katie smiled at her partner and went into the penthouse for a well deserved night's sleep.

\*\*\*Nursery\*\*\*

Carly has just Michael done to sleep for the night, she turns and is surprised to see Alexis standing there.

'Hey,' Carly whispers, not wanting to wake up her son.

'He's beautiful,' Alexis whispered.

'I know,' Carly said and added, 'I was so scared today. When I thought I wouldn't see him ever again.'

Alexis nodded in sympathy. 'You have to trust, well everyone in this group. We would never let anything happen to Michael.'

'I know,' Carly smiled thinking of all the people in the penthouse that loved her little boy.

After a brief silence, Alexis said, 'Can I ask you somethingâ€|personal?'

Carly nodded, a little surprised and said, 'What?'

'Jason is Michael's father. But you obviously are involved with Sonny right now,' Alexis struggled with her thoughts. 'How did you choose?'

Carly laughed and said, 'I don't think I had a choice. Jason and I are friends and will NEVER be anything more than best friends. Sonny is just an amazing, interesting, sexy man and I really really like him.'

Alexis nodded, not really getting the words of wisdom that she wanted.

Carly sensed her disappointment and said, 'And what love triangle are you forming. Ned Ashton and?'

Alexis took a deep breath and said, ''Marcus Taggert.''

''Oh,'' Carly said, thinking about the situation. ''Feel guilty?''

''Oh god yes,'' Alexis said, glad that she had told someone.

''Don't be,'' Carly said smiling and choosing her words carefully.  
''And don't hurry your decision. Wait and see who's really in it for the long run. Let them woo you a little.''

Alexis smiled, considering Carly's selfish, impractical advice. She liked it, a lot. She grinned and said, ''I think I will.''

''Good,'' Carly said, linking arms with Alexis and walking down the hall she whispered, ''So what is Taggert like?''

Alexis laughed and said, ''Very sexy.''

\*\*\*Penthouse Kitchen\*\*\*

Luke is in the kitchen alone, making a call. Most of the penthouse crew had gone to their respective homes. Luke was going to go back to the bar, but he felt the need to inform Laura of his son's involvement in this dangerous plan.

''Hello?'' Laura's voice glided over the telephone causing Luke to smile.

''Darlin? It's Luke. Don't say anything. I have a couple things to say. You probably heard about the explosion. And I thought you'd like to know that our son is quite the hero. And Nikolas.''

''What did they do?'' Laura asked, her voice filled with concern.

''They rescued an elementary school from a bomb. They're both fine, not a scratch on them. BUT, I thought I should tell you that they're involved with a little plot. It's not a big thing,'' Luke lied. ''I don't know all of the details, but it couldn't be too dangerous. I think it's good for the both of them.''

Laura smiled at the thought of her sons working together once again. She asked with trepidation, ''Will you do me a favor?''

''Anything,'' Luke said solemnly.

Laura smiled, almost forgetting the turmoil her life was in.  
''Protect them. Both of them.''

''Always,'' Luke said, and he meant it. ''Kiss Lulu good night for me. I love you Laura.''

Laura smiled at the warmth in his voice and said quietly, and naturally. ''I love you too. Good night.''

\*\*\*Penthouse living room\*\*\*

Jason had certainly had his fair share of absurd situations in the past week. But this was one of the weirdest. Nikolas Cassadine had sat next to him and started a conversation. Not just any conversation, but asked him for advice. Not about what to do in this mission the whole penthouse crew was on, but love advice, about his sister.

'Could you repeat that?' Jason said, truly stupified at Nikolas' request.

'I think I'm in love with your sister,' Nikolas said. 'And I just wanted your advice on what to do.'

Jason rubbed his eyes, wishing this nightmare night would finally end. He finally said quietly, 'Tell her.'

'Tell her? Just come right out and say it?' Nikolas said, not liking Jason's advice very much.

'Well do it in your own way,' Jason said, thinking of how happy his sister would be and wondering if he should be more protective of her against Nikolas. He smiled and said, 'Emily appreciates honesty.'

'Okay,' Nikolas blinked, digesting the fact that Jason hadn't thrown him out of the penthouse yet.

'Is that all?' Jason said, really wanting to go to bed.

'No,' Nikolas said at the last minute. 'Lucky said that you and Kaâ€|my sister had an argument.'

Jason nodded grimly, regretting his display of anger towards Katie.

'I think you should apologize,' Nikolas said bluntly.

'Excuse me?' Jason said, stupified that this boy was still in front of him, saying completely random things.

'I mean, Katie and you make a good team, I saw that today,' Nikolas said honestly. 'And I really don't want you guys arguing. I really don't know why I care, but I do. Don't alienate her from you.'

Nikolas got up from his seat, leaving Jason to wrestle with his own thoughts. In a few minutes Jason got up from his seat and headed over to the other penthouse.

\*\*\*Penthouse Two\*\*\*

Jason walks up to the bedroom door in the other penthouse, he knocks softly and getting no real response, he just begins to speak, 'Thomas? It's Jason. I just wanted to apologize. I didn't mean to lose my temper today and yell at you. I realize that Lucky and Emily and Nikolas can't be controlled by you or anyone else. I was just worried that they would get hurt. But it's their decisions. And I don't want us to argue, we work well together and I want to be your friend, andâ€|dammit Thomas are you listening to me?'

The bedroom door flies open and Lucky is standing there, obviously woken up by Jason's rantings. ''Katie's room is down the hall.''

Jason's face turns slightly red and he gruffly says, ''Thanks.''

''Jason? Make sure you tell HER what you just said. She would appreciate it.''

''Thanks Lucky.''

Jason walks down the hall and knocks lightly on the door. Not taking any chances, he opens it to make sure she is there. He goes to her bed and stares at her sleeping form.

She's lying there, sprawled out underneath a thick, downy comforter. She looks like an angel despite the cuts and bruises all over her body. Her black hair is in complete disarray all over the pillow she's laying her head on. There's a faint blush to her cheeks that brings out her beautiful creamy complexion. Jason loses himself in the sight of her for a second, wondering how he could ever be mad at her. Instead of interrupting her peaceful and well deserved sleep Jason gets a piece of paper and a pen off of her desk and writes out

'I'm sorry Thomas. Jason'

He places it on her mirror, so that she'll be sure to see it in the morning. He looks back at the undeniable beauty sleeping, touches her cheek lightly and says, ''We work well together.''. And then Jason walks out leaving her to get her well deserved rest.

End  
file.